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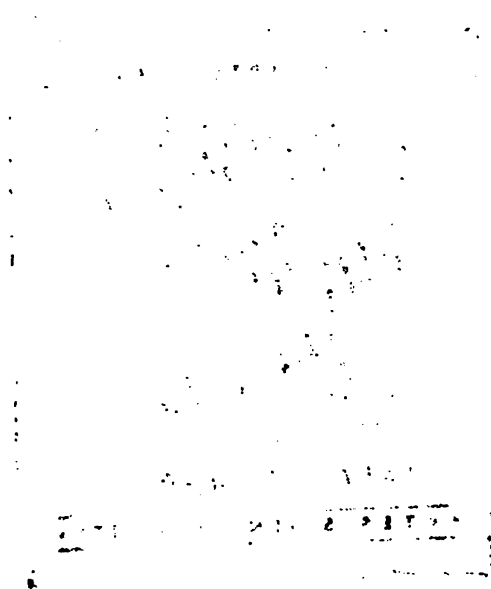
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HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

OF THE

QUEENS OF ENGLAND.

Dup

HISTORICAL MEMOIRS
OF THE
QUEENS OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE

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HISTORICAL MEMOIRS
OF THE
QUEENS OF ENGLAND

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE TWELFTH TO THE CLOSE
OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER XV.

* SOCIETY IN ENGLAND DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

Source of the General Character of the Middle Ages—Influence of Christianity—Causes of the Influence of the Latin Church—The People of England—Their Political—Their Religious—Their Social Condition—Female Character—Female Education—Domestic Duties—Recreations—Popular Literature—Conclusion.

THE close of the thirteenth century affords a suitable resting-place from whence we can survey the state of society in England, and, more especially, trace the effects of those influences which impressed upon mediæval Europe so marked and peculiar a character,—those influences, whose plastic energies passed not away with the romantic and picturesque institutions to which they first gave birth, but which have moulded the whole frame of modern society, and given a distinctive tone to our national literature. A chapter like the present might, at first sight, appear as only serving to interrupt the current of historical narrative; but, when it is remembered how

far more important it is to contemplate whatever can throw light, however faintly, upon the genuine history of mankind, than merely to trace events in their regular sequence; and how necessary to the correct view of any given period is a knowledge of the social condition of the people, we shall find that we cannot better occupy the interval between the death of Elinor of Castile, and the second marriage of Edward, than by an enquiry into the state of society in England during the period which these volumes are intended to illustrate.

In taking even the most cursory view of the mediæval period, the enquirer is struck with the extraordinary character it presents. The mightiest empire the world ever saw had been swept away, and with it the laws, the institutions, the literature, even the languages of the ancient world. A long night succeeded, and then, in the midst of darkness and barbarism, "systems grew into form and consistency which had almost a theoretical perfection; principles unknown before, principles which had their birth in the recognition of man's immortality then found the means of developing themselves, but to increase the wonder and mystery of the period, superstition threw her mantle of clouds and shadows over the whole."

For the source of all these we must not seek among later and more partial influences, but must go back to those early days, ere the tribes of the great Teutonic family emerged from their native forests. Among all the great nations of antiquity, man closely hived in cities was lost in the general mass, and thus came to be viewed but as a mere insignificant frac-

tion of those enormous animal machines, that dug giant canals, and reared everlasting pyramids; but among the widely scattered population of the north, ranging at will over vast plains and forests, each human being stood out from the general mass, and possessed a separate, an underived importance. The dweller of the forest, "lord of himself," aided in framing the laws which regulated the rude commonwealth, and acknowledged no sovereign save him whom his own voice in public assembly had chosen, while each law forcibly exhibited the feeling of the northern nations, not for collective, but for individual man. Hence arose the stern laws that guarded private property, and fenced around the rude homestead; hence the precision with which the *weregild* was adjusted, hence the minuteness of the long catalogue of nicely balanced compensations apportioned to each bodily injury. Hence too, the wildly religious solemnities of their legal forms; and hence the sublime poetry, both of word and symbol, which among all the Teutonic tribes accompanied the sentence of outlawry,—a sentence which, in the awful weight of malediction heaped upon the "homeless one," forcibly proves how precious to these rude dwellers of the forest were *individual* rights.

To the influence of this principle of individuality, the domestic character of these northern tribes may also be referred; and closely connected with that character, or rather springing from it, was the superior station they assigned to woman. Where individuals are viewed but in the mass, woman is of necessity thrown into shade. In the senate, the

army, the popular assembly,—even among those bands of toiling labourers who reared the mighty temples of other days, she had no place, and secluded from public notice, she was scarcely a public care. But in a state of society where the principle of individuality is the basis of the commonwealth, and the state viewed, not as an abstract thing, but a collection of human beings, woman must take her due place; for the first collective form which society assumes is the family, and there is her sphere and her kingdom. Thus we find throughout all the northern tribes, that the same feeling which guarded the man's home as an inviolate sanctuary, gave honour to the presiding genius of the place, and the mistress of the hut of pine branches in the Teutonic forest, honoured by her husband, and revered by sons arrived at manhood, stood on proud vantage-ground compared with the polished but dependent Greek princess in her porphyry halls.

But, ere the nations of Europe emerged from their depths of barbarism, a new element was infused into the rude mass; a far mightier, even a heavenly influence was brought to bear upon society, for "the day-spring from on high," had visited them. The very principle upon which all the institutions of the northern tribes were based, now addressed them in a voice from heaven, "teaching *every* man and warning *every* man," as though to him alone was addressed the message of Salvation. And eagerly did the free barbarian of the north respond to the heavenly call; untrammelled by authority, he spontaneously answered, "What wilt thou have *me* to do?" And

when the Christian teacher entered his rude dwelling, few obstacles were presented to the inculcation of a purer code of morals ; reverence for the aged, respect for woman, purity of manners were there, even before Christianity had set her seal on the domestic virtues. Thus from the peculiar character of these rude but energetic tribes, religion came to mingle harmoniously alike with their social and civil institutions. And great were the benefits which Christianity, together with her divine message, brought to the fathers and founders of the kingdoms of modern Europe. The harvest that first waved amid the wilderness ; the woven garment that superseded the coat of skins, the improved dwelling, the implements of agriculture, the simple code of written laws that regulated the infant community,—all were her gifts. Thus, yielding a willing obedience to her precepts, amid all their rudeness, all that gross superstition and deep ignorance, which as yet she was unable to disperse, a spectacle unknown to the nations of antiquity was presented—of communities based upon the express recognition of man's immortality, and governed by codes that appealed for their sanction, not to the changeful views of human policy, but to the eternal law of God. If the enquirer viewing the ferocity and the barbarism of the earlier portion of the middle ages should ask, where can the moral benefits of Christianity be perceived ? let him look on the one hand to the depths of that degradation, unfathomable to the modern enquirer, in which these nations were plunged ; and on the other, to those manifestations of the gentler virtues, which weak and imper-

fect as they were, still showed amid the thick darkness, like the first trembling rays of morning, or like the swelling bud on the still leafless tree, sure proof of the vigorous life that is stirring and heaving within.

During the succeeding ages, in the progress of European civilization, the Latin church led the way ; and this has impressed, together with a religious, an *ecclesiastical* character upon mediæval Europe.* It was light from the altar that illumined the darkness ; the sage who watched the stars, the statesman who guided the council, the teacher who provided food for the mind, the leech who ministered to the body, all came forth from the cloister : while the very phrase, "the monkish historians," proves from what source we derive nearly all our information respecting a period, extending from the sixth to the fifteenth century. And still, as Europe advanced in civilization, and the arts arose, the Latin church took the lead. She presided over the bands of masons that reared her gorgeous cathedrals ; and she gave the plans, alike for the shrine, the sepulchral monument, the altar plate, and the convent seal. And thus, as to the

* It is curious to observe what an ecclesiastical character pervaded the civil arrangements of the times. The feasts of St. Hilary, Pasch, and St. Michael, were the periods appointed for the sittings of the king's judges ; the morrow of Candlemas, the octave of Easter, and the quinzime of St. Denis, summoned the collectors of the revenue to the Exchequer. The burgess was allowed to turn out his cattle on the town lands from Lammas to the feast of St. Martin ; the workman's daily hours of labour were regulated by the festivals of the church, and while the bell that rung for "Prime" summoned him to his labour, with the evensong bell the toils of the day ended. It is difficult to imagine what our forefathers could have done without the breviary : Walter of Lincoln we are told came to England on the Sunday when "*Gaudete in Domino*" is sung. "Boyle it while ye may saye one Paternoster," is a direction for boiling a posset, and "blowe four *mots*, and stinte (stop) half an *Ave Marye*," the rule for blowing the "dethe when ye harte is ytake."

fount of all that was bright and beautiful, did our forefathers turn to the Latin church, and in all their works of art closely copied her graceful models. The palace hall imitated the convent refectory, the royal vases and chargers were chased after the very pattern of the altar plate, the statues that adorned the hall, or guarded the gateway, were transcripts of those in the cathedral, and even the "boke of romaunts," in its splendid illuminations and costly binding, emulated the gorgeous missal. What wonder was it then that, surrounded on all sides by proofs of her commanding influence, our warm-hearted forefathers, haughty and independent as they were, should yet have bowed so willingly before her footstool, and that after the spirit of religious enquiry was awakened, and men began to question the doctrines of the priest, "holy church" was still the object of their deep and affectionate, though vague and mysterious reverence, and they shrank from the very thought of separation from her fold.

The view hitherto taken, applies equally to all those nations of Europe that bowed to the influence of Christianity, and adopted the feudal system; for all were branches of the great Teutonic family, and their common principles formed the frame-work of their common institutions. But a strong family likeness may subsist with important varieties; and therefore, in endeavouring to obtain a correct view of any one nation of mediæval Europe, we must direct our attention to that nation exclusively; for the seeking to illustrate the character of one, by facts and arguments derived from another, has been the fertile

source of nearly all the misapprehensions which have prevailed respecting the true character of our forefathers.

In directing our view to England, we find its people bringing from their native forests those popular institutions, and that intense love of freedom, which in common with the other Teutonic tribes, were their heritage. But unlike most of their kindred tribes, who mingling with the natives of southern Europe, merged many of their peculiarities, the Angles, driving the aboriginal inhabitants to their mountain fastnesses, possessed themselves of the land, and almost re-peopling it, imposed their own laws, and their own language. And rude as were their laws, and defective as their system of jurisprudence might be, still, that grand feature of the northern tribes, respect for individual rights, pervaded them, and hence arose "that venerable institution, which none but a free and a simple people could have conceived, trial by peers."* Nor was the Norman conquest unfavourable to the political institutions of the English people; those institutions, and their popular forms were preserved, for Saxon and Norman, children of the same family, were each actuated by the same love of freedom, and ere long, joined in demanding the "good old laws of King Edward," and subsequently, the Great Charter. From this period most rapid was the progress of national prosperity; associations were formed for the protection of our infant commerce, the walled towns increased in number and importance, and the "commons" now

* Hallam.

formed "the third estate of the realm," while every Englishman "learned to remember that he was the citizen of a free state, and to claim the common law, as his birthright." A view less favourable to the political situation of our forefathers has generally prevailed, and "the people" have been represented as almost in a state of bondage. The incorrectness of this view has already been shown in a former chapter of this work, by reference to legal documents,* but proofs of the wild freedom which the commons claimed, and enjoyed, are stamped upon every remain of their contemporary literature. It is seen in the fierce sarcasms of Matthew Paris, against Henry and Elinor of Provence; in the eulogies heaped by succeeding monkish chroniclers, upon Symond de Montfort, earl Thomas of Lancaster, duke Thomas of Gloster, all the champions of popular rights; in the stern satire of Piers Plowman, who bids the tiller of the ground demand political equality; in the vivid pictures given by Chaucer of the comfort, and the independence of the lower orders; above all, in those snatches of old song, still cherished among our peasantry, which record the wild daring of the outlaws of Sherwood, "who cared not for King or Baron."

Indeed the opposite view, which regards the commons as a wild and turbulent multitude, ever ready, in the characteristic words of their old proverb, "for the feast or the fray," is of the two opinions the best founded. The continual state of warfare which was maintained along the Welch and Scottish marches; the injurious policy which kept Wales and Cheshire

* Vide vol. 1, chapter 12, p. 345.

distinct from the rest of the kingdom, and gave a peculiar jurisdiction both to the Bishop of Durham and the Duke of Lancaster, had all a tendency to increase the disorders, which a half civilized population, proud of their political rights, and resolute to maintain them, will always exhibit.* It is important too for the enquirer to bear in mind, when reading accounts of the popular insurrections of this period, that nothing at all like the control of modern times was exercised by the governments of the middle ages. There was neither a government police to suppress local riots, nor a standing army to put down more formidable insurrections. Every man, according to his standing, was required to possess arms and to learn their use; even the very lowest of the community were accustomed to the almost daily use of the quarter-staff or the long-bow, and thus, when an armed force was brought to bear upon the band of rioters, it was not the well ordered regiment bearing down an undisciplined multitude,—but bill met bill, partizan was opposed to partizan, while the shaft from the bow of the peasant flew with a force, which even the twisted mail of the leader's hauberk could not resist. We are apt to forget that the unrivalled archer-band that shared with our chivalry the glory of Cressy and Poitiers, and the stout yeomanry who

* So fearful were our forefathers of infringement on what they considered popular rights, that in the reign of Richard II. an Act having been passed "enabling magistrates to commit the ringleaders of tumultuary assemblies without waiting for legal process, till the next arrival of justices of jail delivery," the commons petitioned next year against this "horrible grievous ordinance," by which "every freeman in the kingdom would be in bondage to these justices," contrary to the Great Charter, and to many statutes which forbid any man to be taken without due course of law. So sensitive was their jealousy of arbitrary imprisonment. Hallam, vol. 3, p. 253.

presented so steadfast a front at Azincourt, were not regular troops, but the peasantry of old England, summoned from their pleasant fields and cherished homesteads, to display on the plains of France that prowess, which until then, had found no scope save in the friendly contests of the village. Surely if these considerations are allowed their due weight, we may rather wonder at the general degree of order, and submission to the laws, which prevailed, than at occasional outbreaks.

But while the remoter parts of the country, and especially those near the Welch and Scottish marches were in a continual state of tumult, the midland and southern parts, and the larger towns, except during times of political commotion, seem to have enjoyed a fair state of tranquillity. The flourishing condition of the chief trading towns, and the wealth of the "frankelyns" of Kent, Surrey, Essex, and many of the midland counties, amply prove this assertion. The peace of the metropolis and the security of its inhabitants seem to have been as well preserved during the 14th and 15th centuries as in the present day. This probably was chiefly owing to the vigilant care which the livery companies exercised, not merely over the members of each guild, and their apprentices, but over all their workmen. And when we remember that every shop along Westcheap, and part of Ludgate-hill, exhibited its articles for sale on a sloping board, without even the partial security of glass windows, and that these consisted of the richest silks, the costliest furs, the most expensive spices, and gold and silver plate, and jewellery so splendid, that

Westcheap became celebrated, even in foreign lands, for its display, surely the principle of honesty, or the fear of punishment, must have been strong among the lower orders, to prevent them from seizing such tempting spoils. And peace seems to have been well preserved on occasions of public festivity, without the intervention of an armed force. In the civic processions, if the lord mayor were a Goldsmith, the most gorgeous display of plate was made; if a Mercer, the richest "gold baudekin" decked the pageants, and yet the city annals do not furnish a single instance of a procession being thrown into confusion and robbed. Many a queen, with her attendant ladies, decked with the costliest jewels, the trappings of their palfreys adorned with the richest silks and goldsmith's work, have rode along from the Tower to Smithfield, unguarded save by their knights and esquires, "in weeds of peace," nor was the slightest insult or injury ever offered to them.

The period has been termed barbarous;—to compare it with the present day would be unjust; but comparing the general state of society during this period, with that in the 16th and 17th centuries, we may fairly question the correctness of the phrase. During the rule of our illustrious Plantagenets, the use of torture, to which so many fell victims in the reigns of the Tudors, was absolutely unknown; and executions for treason, in themselves rare, were very rarely accompanied by those horrible details, which throughout the 16th century to the close of the 17th, indeed even later, were never omitted. The Star Chamber, and the High Commission Court,

were alike unknown to these earlier days, when, if injustice were perpetrated, it was not under the forms of law. Nor were the disgraceful punishments of the Stuart times inflicted during these ages, when if the brand were applied, it was on the convicted thief, not upon the man of birth and education. Nor, in viewing the condition of the middle and lower classes, is there any proof that the 16th and 17th centuries stood on high vantage ground compared with the middle ages. Those who vainly attempted during the earlier part of the 17th century to suppress the tumults and murders of Alsatia, had little reason to look with scorn on their fathers, for allowing the right of sanctuary; nor had they, who eyed with suspicion every neighbour, whose firesides were the scenes of the most melancholy distrust and foreboding, through fears of witchcraft, much reason to abuse the superstition of an earlier period. In a less advanced stage of society, with limited means of instruction, with scanty religious knowledge, as compared with later days, still, a rude and energetic population exhibited those traits of kindness, and benevolent feeling, which we may seek for in vain, from the period of the revival of learning. To account for this singular, but most beneficial anomaly, we must contemplate the religious and moral instruction of our fathers in the middle ages.

Accustomed as we are to receive so large a portion of our information through the medium of printing, we can with difficulty conceive the extent to which oral communication may be carried among those who are ignorant of letters, and forgetful of the deep im-

pression which this, the most natural mode of instruction, makes on the untutored mind, we are apt to underrate the intellectual character of the middle ages, because books were scarce, and reading equally so. Thus, because the Scriptures were not in every man's hand, we have been told that our forefathers were wholly destitute of religious knowledge; and yet there is much to disprove this assertion. In the Sarum missal, which supplied the formulary of worship to the greater part of England, a very large collection of Scriptural extracts will be found. In only *one* of the services for Christmas-day, eight chapters were read; for each other high festival, the extracts are in proportion; each day has its appropriate lesson, and the whole book of Psalms is divided into seven parts and apportioned to each of the seven daily services. All these portions of Scripture we have every reason to believe that the people heard in their mother tongue, for translations of them are found in the very rudest English, and are considered to belong to as early a period as the reign of the first Plantagenet, about which time a canon of Peterborough named Ormin also made a translation, accompanying them with an exposition.* A metrical version of the Psalms, Creed, and Commandments, of nearly as early a date, exists in the Lambeth library, and this must necessarily have been intended for popular use. For the higher classes of our population, who used the Norman French, there is a psalter existing of nearly as early a date as the eleventh century, and large portions of the Bible were translated, (probably the whole)

* Vide "Guest's History of English Rhymes."

during the twelfth.* It is important to bear in mind that the Latin church offered no opposition to the reading of the Scriptures by the laity, until a very late period; and that Archbishop Arundel, in his answer to Wickliffe, expressly asserts that there were translations previously to his, existing in the English tongue. There were other means too by which religious instruction was diffused among the people. The sermons of the itinerant preachers, which, judging from the only specimen hitherto discovered,† provided simple and clear instruction for the wayfaring man; the miracle plays to which our forefathers so eagerly pressed, where, in the midst of the most homely and often ludicrous details, close and spirited versions of Scriptural passages will be found. But whatever might be the extent of the religious knowledge of the people at large, one portion of Scripture which was more than any other incorporated with the formularies of the Latin church was familiar to their minds—the Gospels. It was from them they derived those lessons of kindness and benevolence which they so touchingly displayed, and the miracles, but above all, the parables of our Saviour, were wrought upon the arras, embroidered by the lady, painted in the royal hall, chased upon the royal plate, and formed the never-failing theme of the homily of the learned clerk, and the address of the wayside preacher.

And how beautifully adapted to the state of society in the middle ages were the parables, those divinely embodied lessons of gentleness, mercy, and love, that

* Vide Hist. Litt. tom. 9, and Rocquesfort.

† Vide Extracts from "le Sermon du Guichard de Beaulieu" in the former volume, p. 291.

enfolded every living being in its wide embrace! And how singularly adapted, even in their minutest details, were they to the every day life of our forefathers! The treasure buried in the earth lest thieves should steal it; the man robbed and wounded on the highway; the vineyard let out to husbandmen, (and *vineyards*, in the middle ages, were common in England); the housewife's careful search for the silver penny, during this period the payment for a whole day's labour; and the merchant's joy at "the pearl of great price," in an age when gems were so eagerly sought after, and so highly prized. And in an age of great external pomp and vivid contrasts, how forcible was the story of the rich man and Lazarus; the one clothed "in purple and fine linen," almost the very phrase by which the coarsely clad peasant would recognize the noble, and the desolate leper at his gate. But here the parallel ends, for, among our forefathers, no Lazarus sought crumbs from the rich man's table in vain. The parable of the prodigal son too, how touching was his deep degradation as a swineherd, among a people who viewed that office as the lowest of any in their extensive households; and then all the festive usages of the middle ages graced his return—the feast, the music, the dancing, the fatted calf, that luxury of our forefathers; and the robe, which as a feudal investiture restored to him his forfeited rights, and the ring, that symbol of rank and union, which placed him again as an equal at his father's table. The singular adaptation of the parables to the institutions of *feudal* Europe, are indeed most striking. The messengers sent to reduce the

refractory garrison to obedience, each nobler than the last, our forefathers beheld when Kenilworth was besieged, and their final punishment when the king should "burn up their city," was emphatically shown in the smoking ruins of Winchester. And the great supper, the parable more than any other urged by the earnest preacher, in its minutest details shadowed forth what each Pasch, and Pentecost, and Christmastide, passed before their eyes. The herald train summoning all to the monarch's palace—the poor, and the lame, and the maimed, and the blind, literally from the highways and hedges, pressing in to the royal feast. And well did they know that a scornful or even a careless rejection of that summons, or unwillingness to be invested with the monarch's own livery, would be punished by "donjon and gallows tree."

Thus, from its singular applicability to the circumstances of society, the religious instruction of the middle ages addressed itself with a prevailing force, a resistless influence, which neither superstition nor attendant error could destroy, and impressed upon the social character of the middle ages, that gentleness which softened so beneficially the fierce and haughty qualities of a warlike people; that courtesy, which like a richly wrought mantle spread itself so gracefully over society; that abundant and splendid benevolence, which bade uncivilized Europe rear those palace dwellings for the sick and the destitute, which Greece with all her refinement, and Rome with all her wealth, could never show.

And harmonizing well with the lessons thus taught, the popular literature in legend and romance re-

echoed in a hundred ways the same duty of kindness; and told how St. Martin divided his only cloak with the beggar, and St. Edward drew the ring from his finger that the moneyless pilgrim might cross the ferry;—how Sir Amadas, deprived of his estates through too abundant liberality, yet bestowed his last bezant upon the funeral of the merchant; how “Ysaie le Triste,” knight as he was, “loved poor men,” and Sir Lanval expended the gifts of faerie in succouring the distressed, and ransoming captives. And well was the often repeated lesson learnt; the feast was never made without the poor being invited to partake, and the fragments of the daily meal in the castle hall were given to the way-farer. At the christening, the marriage, and the funeral feast, food and clothing for the indigent were largely provided, while establishments for the relief of every species of human misery arose in every part of the land. In a more advanced state of society such extensive almsgiving might be injurious; but at a time when political convulsions might reduce the loftiest to beggary, when famine might in a single winter consume the savings of years, or pestilence sweep away the whole family, and leave the aged man desolate, that spontaneous and abundant charity was not too great.

By a natural consequence did neighbourly feelings prevail; and every event of domestic life, from the cradle to the bier, afforded scope for the interchange of kindly offices. The infant soon after its birth was borne by neighbours to the church to receive baptism; the mother in white veil and holiday dress, in company with her neighbours, proceeded thither to

her "churching," and all on their return feasted merrily. The pilgrim who had determined to visit some distant shrine, appeared before the altar surrounded by his neighbours, to receive the staff and the scrip, and the same friendly company went with him to the nearest town, or seaport, and duly kept his name in remembrance in the "bidding prayer."* The bridal procession proceeded to church along the flower-strewn way, and surrounded by his neighbours, the father at the church door declared the bride's portion, and the husband assigned the dower, and the listeners marked it well, for by their evidence would the wife's right be established hereafter. And every minor event—the building a new house, the entering upon a new farm, the return of the voyager, the heir's majority, all afforded opportunities of friendly meetings, and the interchange of neighbourly kindness. And when at length the aged man lay stretched on his death-bed, neighbours with their kindly offices and heartfelt prayers filled the room; and when the corpse, with uncovered face and uplifted hands, was placed on the bier outside the door, all the neighbours, as to a solemn religious duty, gathered round, and preceded by the sexton ringing the "death-bell," or by priests with chant and taper, they bore him to his last resting-place, whither so many of their number had already been borne, and whither ere long they

* In an old form of the "bidding prayer," preserved in Hearne, after directing the people to "knele down upon your knees, and make speciale prayer" for "alle holy kirkes," for the kingdom, and many other particulars, it continues, "and also specially for alle our parishioners, quersomever they be stad on lande or water, that God of hys mercie save hem fro alle adversyties and peryl; and those that be in gode lyf and gode hele, God holde hem longe in, and those that be *in dette*, or deadly synne, God send hem soon out thro oure prayers."

should follow, and laid him among his brethren, companions in death as in life. Nor here did their friendly offices cease; the neatly graven brass, or rude stone, implored the prayers of the passer by, and the earnest supplication was breathed by neighbour lips for him who mouldered below. Thus were those feelings so inwrought, that among our forefathers the mere term unneighbourly, characterized the man as a churl, and scantily a christian.

With the lessons of charity and neighbourly kindness, the kindred duties of gentleness and courtesy were strictly enjoined. The warlike spirit of the middle ages could tell the knight to be "fierce toward his foeman," but it was Christianity alone that taught him the gentler part of his chivalric vow; to be "courteous to his friends, and meek toward the lowly." "The knight without pity, is a knight without worship," grew almost into a proverb; and that it was ever kept in view by the knights of the fourteenth century, the delightful pages of Froissart afford ample proof. The beautiful combination of sterner and gentler qualities, which the chivalrous character presents, could only have been derived from that source whence our forefathers also derived their benevolent feeling, and for the first time in the world's history, meekness, humility, and tenderness of heart took their place in the catalogue of masculine virtues.

And to the influence of that religion, whose divine founder first commenced his teachings with benedictions on the gentler virtues, that deep and ardent respect for woman, which the whole history of the middle ages exhibits, may also be traced. Respect for

woman, it is true, our forefathers brought with them from their native forests ; but that feeling was refined and exalted by Christianity. The virtues which she was believed to display, were the peculiar virtues of the Christian faith ; and an ardent and imaginative race invested her with a halo of saintly purity. The graceful creed of chivalry willingly adopted and carried out still farther the popular belief, and "*hommage aux dames*" became the watchword of chivalrous Europe. In a work devoted to female biography, a rather minute view of the state of women in England during this period can scarcely be misplaced ; more especially since the misapprehensions which have prevailed respecting their condition have, in many instances, given a false colouring to the statements of those writers who have made this period their study.

One important mistake, which has very generally prevailed, is that women in the middle ages were war-like. Contemplating the unsettled and belligerent state of society, taking the fictions too of poets who flourished *after* the days of chivalry had passed, for pictures of genuine manners, the "ladye" has been represented as a complete Amazon. Now even a slight acquaintance with the modes of warfare adopted during the middle ages is sufficient to disprove this, for how could a lady, accustomed only to the loosely flowing robe or easily laced boddice, bear the weight and constraint of a coat of mail ? how could her "fyngers longe and smal," grasp the battle-axe of twelve or fourteen pounds weight, or poise the heavy lance twelve feet long ? It was only by slow degrees that the knight himself became accustomed to his armour, and his

chivalrous education commenced at fourteen years of age ; the lady, therefore, if during the absence of its lord the castle was menaced by foemen, confined her duty to general superintendence, and like Philippa at Neville's Cross, and Jane de Montfort at Hennebon, to " valiantly encouraging her friends and soldiers, like a right noble lady." *

Equally incorrect is the picture so often given of the lady attending upon her knight in the disguise of a page. This might be the case in the less chivalrous days of the Tudors and Stuarts, when the duties of a page were almost feminine, and the silken surcoat had superseded the coat of mail ; but no such incident will be found, either in history, or in the *genuine* romances of chivalry, or in any of the numerous tales of Gower, Chaucer, or Occleve. In the rude ballad, the " ladye faire" may indeed proffer " Childe Waters" to become his page, and he most unchivalrously consent ; but the ancient ballad must *never* be taken as a test of manners among the higher classes. That the high-born lady should lay aside her fitting apparel, and her womanly self-respect, to ride beside the knight, bearing his helm or penon—that she should assist him to dismount and should groom his steed, would have been viewed by the Mannys, the Chandos, and the Beauchamps, as even more derogatory to the lofty feelings of the knight than to the honour of the lady. The character of woman in the middle

* The only exception to these remarks is Joan of Arc, but we must remember that she was accustomed to laborious employments as a peasant girl from her infancy, and also, that except in one or two instances her duty was confined to leading the vanguard, banner in hand. Margaret of Anjou, it is true, led the partisans of the Red Rose to battle, but she took no part in the conflict.

ages was dignified and feminine; she neither rode beside her knight to the battle-field, nor waited on him as a servant. But when he was struck down in fight, or fell sick on his long and perilous journeys, womanly kindness sprung forth with spontaneous aid, and the most high-born lady dressed the wounds and watched over the sick bed of the stranger knight with earnest and unceasing care; for that was a high and a sacred office which she was especially called upon to fulfil. And then too it was a peculiar office;—to the task of waiting upon the knight, in health, any servitor was competent; but to bind up his wounds, to prepare the fitting medicines, to watch the alternations of disease, or the progress of cure, these required skill and knowledge, which, slight indeed compared with that of the present day, was yet in an imaginative age deemed little less than divine. Thus, even when performing the commonest duties of a nurse, the knight never could consider the lady as degraded, for such duties the lady abbess herself would willingly perform, and such duties would receive the approval of Him, who in the story of the good Samaritan, first taught that lesson of mercy.

But although the correct feeling of the middle ages forbade the lady to follow her knight in unfeminine disguise, she was far from being an unconcerned listener to the tale of his prowess. She watched with eager interest over his career, bound the “kerchief de plaisir” on his arm ere he set out, and sent him many a letter, (for ladies did write in these days,) and many a ring, and many a lock of hair curiously inwoven with silk, to encourage him. “O that my

lady saw me!" exclaimed a right valiant English knight after performing a deed of matchless prowess; and the gallant doings of Sir Eustace d' Ambreticourt, who did such feats of arms for love of the lady Isabel, "who sent him fine horses, and loving letters;" and the mournful tale of Sir John Walton, who, killed at the siege of Douglas Castle, (Castle Perilous) was found with a letter from his lady-love in his bosom, commending his valiancy, but praying him to return home lest his life should be in jeopardy, have been often told. That the interest which the lady felt in the career of her knight was his highest incentive to valour, is proved by the whole history of chivalry.

From the almost extravagant expressions of respect for his lady love, which the knight in the romances of chivalry displays, many writers have considered chivalry itself as a mere fanciful institution, which, although it might exercise a certain influence over the minds of the young nobility, could produce no general effect upon the nations of feudal Europe. Had such writers been more extensively acquainted with the contemporary literature of the period, and thus become familiar with the *spirit* of the middle ages, they would have found that chivalry was a natural result of the combination of those principles, whose influence we have traced. Thus the chivalrous feeling pervaded all society, and when the knight of Chaucer exclaims so heartily,—

"To fight for a lady, ah! benedicite
It were a godely sighté for to see,"

he but echoed the popular feeling.

There is great beauty in the character of these

high-born women, as delineated by our early poets—the lady of whom Gower says that she is “all godelyhede and innocence, withouten spot of any blame,” and therefore at her remembrance he—

“Sometimes is so overglad,
And out of rewle, and out of space;
For when I see her goodly face,
And thynke upon her hyghe prise,
'Tis as I were in Paradyse.”

And the “emperice” who was “fayre and pure as is the lyly floure.” And then the female characters of Chaucer. Canace, so full of “veray womanly benigneitee,” the lady prioress, so “plesant and amiable of hert,” and so gentle, and piteous, and kind, that in her, “al was conscience, and tender herte.” And Custance too, in whom was—

“high beautye withoute pride,
And youthe withouten grenehede or folie,
To al her werkes virtue was her sure guide,
She was the mirror of al curtesie;
Her herte, the veray chambre of holiness.”

And Grisildis, worthy a far better fate, who was

“So discrete, and faire of eloquence,
And so benigne, so digne of reverence,
And couldé so the peples herte embrace
That eche her loved, that looked on her face.”

Surely these must have been close copies of the graceful and stately ladies, whom Gower and Chaucer were accustomed to behold among the gentle company that adorned the court of the noble-minded Philippa, and of that “gracious lady,” as the old chronicle of London so affectionately terms her, Anne of Bohemia.

It is difficult to ascertain from what source those writers, who have represented the ladies of the middle ages as ignorant even of writing, could have derived their information. Romance, and chronicle alike, describe them as being well accustomed to the pen; and it may also be remarked, that when Robert d'Artois sought for a skilful writer to forge several legal documents, it was a woman who executed the task, and executed it so well that the fraud was undiscovered for some time.* Nor were the ladies of this period uneducated, even according to modern views. After French ceased in great measure to be the language of the upper classes, it was still taught, while Latin made a necessary part of a convent education. It was only during the middle ages, that the world ever saw a regular provision made for the instruction of women; and at a period so unjustly termed barbarous, there were noble institutions, which in conformity to the Benedictine rule, apportioned part of their wealth expressly to this important purpose. In consequence of convents being considered as establishments exclusively belonging to the Latin church, protestant writers, as by common consent, have joined in censuring them, forgetful of the many benefits which, without any reference to their peculiar creed, they were calculated to confer. Although providing instruction for the young, the convent was a large establishment for various orders of women. There were the nuns, the lay-sisters, always a numerous class, and a large body of domestics, while in those higher convents, where the abbess exercised

* Vide Froissart.

manorial jurisdiction, there were seneschal, esquires, gentlemen, yeomen, grooms, indeed the whole establishment of a baronial castle, except the men-at-arms and the archer band.* Thus, within the convent walls, the pupil saw nearly the same domestic arrangements to which she had been accustomed in her father's castle; while, instead of being constantly surrounded by children, well-born and intelligent women might be her occasional companions. And then, the most important functions were exercised by women, The abbess presided in her manorial court, the cellaress performed the extensive offices of steward, the præcentrix led the singing and superintended the library, and the infirmaress watched over the sick, affording them alike spiritual and medical aid. Thus, from her first admission, the pupil was taught to respect, and to emulate, the talents of women. But a yet more important peculiarity did the convent school present. It was a noble, a well endowed, and an independent institution; and it proffered education as a boon. Here was no eager canvassing for scholars, no promises of unattainable advantages, for the convent school was not a mercantile establishment, nor was education a trade. The female teachers of the middle ages were looked up to alike by parent and child; and the instruction so willingly offered was willingly and gratefully received; the character of the teacher was elevated, and as a necessary consequence, so was the character of the pupil.

* These, however, the abbess was required to furnish for the wars, in proportion to the knights' fees belonging to the convent. Vide *Monasticon*, under the heads of Barking, Romsey, Shaftesbury and other Abbeys for females.

And well fitted to perform the wide range of duties, which in that early day was required of each mistress of a household, were the pupils of the convent school. While to play on the harp, and citole, (a species of lute,) to execute various kinds of the most costly and delicate needlework, and in some instances to "pourtraye" were, in addition to more literary pursuits, the accomplishments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the functions which the mistress of an extensive household was expected to fulfil, were never lost sight of. Few readers are aware of the various qualifications requisite to form the "good housewife," during the middle ages.* In the present day, when household articles of every kind are obtainable in any country town, and, with few exceptions, throughout the year, we can know little of the judgment, the forethought, and the nice calculation which were required in the mistress of a household consisting probably of three score, or even more persons, and who, in the autumn, had to provide almost a twelve-month's stores. There was the firewood, the rushes to strew the rooms, the malt, the oatmeal, the honey, at this period the substitute for sugar, the salt, only sold in large quantities, and if in the country, the wheat and the barley for the bread,—all to be provided, and stored away. The greater part of the meat used for the winter's provision, was killed and salted down at Martinmas, and the mistress had to provide the necessary stock for the winter, and spring

* In the minute description of the duties of the cellaress of Barking Abbey, in *Monasticon*, vol. 1st. a curious illustration of her multifarious duties will be found, which together with the "Paston Letters," the "Plumpton correspondence," and similar collections have supplied the following picture of the middle-age housewifery.

consumption, together with the stock-fish, and "baconed herrings," for Lent. Then, at the annual fair, the only opportunity was afforded for purchasing those more especial articles of housewifery which the careful housewife never omitted buying. The ginger, nutmegs, and cinnamon for the Christmas posset, and Sheer Monday furmety; the currants and almonds for the Twelfth night cake (an observance which dates almost as far back as the Conquest;) the figs, with which our forefathers always celebrated Palm Sunday; and the pepper, the saffron, and the cummin, so highly prized in ancient cookery. All these articles bore high prices, and therefore it was with great consideration and care that they were bought.

But the task of providing raiment for the family also devolved on the mistress, and there were no dealers, save for the richer articles of wearing apparel, to be found. The wool that formed the chief clothing, was the produce of the flock, or purchased in a raw state; and was carded, spun, and in some instances woven, at home. Flax also, was often spun for the coarser kinds of linen, and occasionally woven. Thus, the mistress of a household had most important duties to fulfil; for on her wise and prudent management depended not merely the comfort, but the actual well-being, of her extensive household. If the winter's stores were insufficient there were no markets from whence an additional supply could be obtained, and the lord of wide estates and numerous manors might be reduced to the most annoying privations, through the mismanagement of the

mistress of the family. The same respectful feeling for woman, which characterized this period, increased too the responsibilities of the high-born lady. Viewed as the fountain of mercy, and the source of redress for every grievance, it was to her that the vassal came with complaints of ill usage, and the tenant with petition for aid in every emergency; and how willingly that aid was afforded, the chronicles supply abundant proofs; and the records of many a borough can show, what important extensions of their franchises the burgesses obtained from their lord, through the successful mediation of the lady.

But numerous and pressing as were the occupations even of the high-born, at this period, the lives of females did not wear out in a weary and ceaseless routine of domestic duties. The pleasant calendar of our forefathers was marked with many a red letter day; and the swiftly recurring festivals of the church furnished holidays in which the whole people, with one heart and mind, participated. Christmastide, so long before its coming hailed by the daily service in the church, and the holy carol by night when the hall was dressed with holly, and the yule log brought in, and every woman throughout the land laid aside her distaff, as a religious duty, from Christmas eve to the morrow of Twelfth day; and when the feasting in the royal hall sometimes extended even to Candlemas. Then, after "black Lent," came Easter, and after the hearths on holy Saturday were duly cleaned and decked with green boughs, and early spring flowers, mistress and handmaidens alike prepared for the whole succeeding week to keep holiday.

And then followed Pentecost; at the monarch's court the chief of the three great festivals, because the gentler season, and the lengthened days, afforded facilities to the nobles from the most remote parts, to appear and proffer their annual "suit and service." And here, the lady displaying her richest apparel, her brow wreathed with spring-tide roses, joined in the royal procession to the minster on Whit-sunday, and sat spectatress of the tournament, on the following days. At this season too the civic companies went in procession and, in many parts of the kingdom, performed their miracle plays; and to these the poorest housewife in her annual kersey gown could go, for the wish of excluding the lower orders from any sport or amusement formed no part of the customs of those days. And after the amusements of the morning closed, while knights and ladies partook the royal banquet at Westminster, the brethren and sisters of the trade guilds of the country towns, and of the wealthy livery companies of London, feasted as merrily in their halls. Wherever the feast was spread, during the middle ages, there the presence of the ladies was invited, and the grave "marchaunts" of the city, no less than the chivalrous noble, seem to have held the opinion of Sir Amadis of Gaul, that, "a feast without the ladies, is like a holiday without the sun."

The various pleasant meetings of neighbours which have before been referred to, filled up the intervals between the great Church festivals; the fairs, mostly held during autumn, afforded to the middle and lower classes opportunities both for business and amuse-

ment ; while within the domestic circle, a spirit of kindness prevailed that sweetened daily labour by the alternation of sports and pastimes. A pleasing picture is presented by Fitz-Sтивен in his description of London in the twelfth century, where he represents the citizens as seated at their doors during the summer evening, and the household maidens "leading the dance," in the streets. The willingness of the fathers of our city too, that their apprentices should enjoy suitable recreation, is proved by many a rule and bye-law of the Livery Companies, which determine as specifically and as authoritatively the hours of amusement, as the hours of labour. When the long winter nights prevented their out-door recreations, the whole household was accustomed to assemble around the blazing hearth, and relate short stories, or listen to the longer lay, or romaunt, with a faith that knew no misgivings, for then was,—

" that happy season,
Ere bright Fancy bent to reason
When the spirit of our stories
Filled the mind with unseen glories ;
Told of creatures of the air,
Spirits, fairies, goblins rare,
Guarding man with tenderest care."

The popular literature of the middle ages was necessarily impressed with the same general character of wild adventure, strange and startling incidents, and that large admixture of supernatural machinery which could not but find a place among a people accustomed to invoke the aid of beatified spirits on every occasion, and who believed every "dingle, dell, and bosky bourne," to be haunted by its graceful faerie, or mis-

chievous sprite. Still, in the midst of this general resemblance, its peculiar national character will be found pervading the popular literature of each nation of Europe. Thus the early Italian tales exhibit scarcely any supernatural agency, while the German popular stories revel in the wildest and most imaginative fictions. The Spanish ballads show that the vicinity of the Moors gave a decidedly oriental colouring to their popular literature; classical fable peeps out from beneath its gothic shrine, in many of the tales of Aquitaine and Provence,—nations among whom the Latin tongue, and the superstitions of classical antiquity, were perhaps preserved longer than anywhere else;* while the poetic fictions of the Celtic tribes,—the giant, the dwarf, the charmed fountain, and the ever youthful faerie,—that legacy of the ancient Britons, gave their distinctive character to English mediæval literature. But while a difference may thus be traced even in the poetical agencies employed, a far greater difference will be found in their respective standards of morality. Almost every writer has, however, forgotten or been unconscious of this, and English manners and English morals have been illustrated from the Italian tale, and the French fabliau, and thus a view as unjust has been taken, as if the writer had pointed to the modern French novels as pictures of the manners of England.

In turning to those romances of undoubted English origin, such as “Kynge Horne,” “Guy of Warwick,” and “Sir Bevis,” and to those which are most probably so, “Sir Amadas,” “Sir Isumbras,” “Yawaine

* Vide Rocquefort.

and Gawain," "Emare," "Lybeus," * and the list might be much further extended, we find a collection of tales which, in their general character, harmonize well with the moral feelings of the present day; and which, were it not for the prosaic and wearisome prolixity of many parts, might even now be listened to with interest. The same character of kindliness which pervaded all society is displayed in these transcripts of popular manners;—the knight is "the mirror of courtesy," and not merely do his very lowest domestics share in his sympathies, but his good steed, his falcon, and his faithful dog. The ladies, although sketched with a ruder pencil, exhibit that mixture of dignity and sweetness which the fictitious heroines of our early poets, and the genuine historical characters of Froissart, display. The supernatural agency is mostly Celtic, and the vast forest, or the vicinity of the enchanted lake, the scene of the heroes' exploits. Sir Guy and Sir Bevis, however, visit Palestine, and then saints and angels watch over the champion of the Cross, and by dreams and miracles warn him of danger, or point out the path of safety. Many of those early romances, which present rather a religious character, such as "Kynge Robert of Cysille," and "le bone Florence de Rome," have been in great measure borrowed from "that most amusing storehouse of monkish stories," the "Gesta Romanorum;" for to the pious tale, especially on days devoted to Church festivals, our forefathers listened with almost as eager delight, as to the lay of faerie.

* These metrical romances will all be found either entire in the collections of Ritson and Weber, or in an analysis with selections in the Specimens of the late Mr. Ellis.

So numerous indeed did these religious tales become throughout all Europe, that legend divided with romance the whole field of popular literature; but so extravagant, and even blasphemous, were many of these that, with one class of writers, the very name of legend is never used save as a term of contempt. This is however most unjust; for while many of these monkish stories fully deserve that censure which has been indiscriminately cast on all, there are many, scattered among our ancient chronicles, or existing in rude verse, which, with simple pathos and strong poetic effect, teach the great lessons of justice, charity, and trust in heaven.* The saintly legend too, has peculiar claims on the respect of the English reader, since from no other source have our earliest English poets derived so many of their most beautiful tales, as from the ample storehouse of monkish fiction. The wildly imaginative cast of many of these venerable stories, the touching pictures which they so often present, of the right triumphing over injustice, and of innocence long borne down by oppression, vindicated at length, by the direct intervention of Heaven—above all, those exquisite pictures of womanly purity and fortitude, surrounded by dangers, and passing unscathed through all, seem to

* Many very excellent legends will be found in Caxton's edition of the *Polychronicon*, and they read to great advantage in the simple and naïve language of that venerable father of printing. The specimens which Mr. Turner has given in his account of Robert le Brunne, too, are worthy notice. These however, are not original, but will be found, with many more, in the work of an Anglo-Norman *trouvere* named Waddington, from whose "*Manuel des Peches*" Brunne translated them. But the most interesting collection of monkish legends and tales is the "*Gesta Romanorum*," a work compiled in Latin, about the beginning of the fourteenth century, and which soon became very popular in England. There is an excellent translation of it by the Rev. C. Swan.

have addressed themselves to the heart, and to the mind of the early poet, with irresistible force. That theme, of the fair and high-born lady, cast out from her home and country, wandering in the desolate forest, or floating on the wide sea, still placing her trust in Heaven, and still, in each peril, guarded by miracle, was the theme beyond every other on which he delighted to dwell. Not merely did many a rude versifier, but Gower, Chaucer, Occleve, —each in his own peculiar style, and each with new and graceful varieties,—have told the same story; and we follow the changeful fortunes of Constance, of Custance, of the “emperice,” with an interest akin to that which we feel, while tracing the wanderings of “heavenly Una, and her milk-white lamb,” in that sweetest, and most imaginative of poems, the Faery Queen.

The sketch thus given of the social condition of our forefathers, although necessarily slight, as confined within the limits of a single chapter, may perhaps aid in throwing some additional light on the peculiar character of a most interesting, and important, but singularly ill understood period. To trace the effects of those combined influences to which the reader's attention has been directed, on the national character, and to exhibit the living and breathing influence of those gentler virtues, which this era of chivalry displayed, will be our pleasant task in the succeeding chapters.

MARGARET OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER XVI.

War with France—Decree of the Pope—Story of Mary of Brabant—Edward's Marriage with Margaret—Geffry of Monmouth appealed to by Edward—Gold-seeking—Robbery of the Exchequer—Knighthood conferred on Edward's Son—The Form of Inauguration—The Vow of the Swan—The Grey Friars—Margaret Builds their Church—The Minoreesses of St. Clare—Death of Edward—His Funeral—Death of Margaret.

THE period that intervened between the death of Elinor of Castile and his second marriage, saw Edward engaged in war with Scotland, and subsequently with France. The occasion of the latter arose from the quarrel of an English and a Norman sailor, who having met by accident, fought; when the Norman having been killed, the Englishman was rescued by his shipmates. Retaliation on the part of the Normans followed; they boarded the first English vessel they met, took out a merchant, who was passenger, and hanged him at their mast-head. From henceforward the French and English mariners carried on a fierce and savage warfare; and at length the French combining their forces, two hundred ships rode triumphantly in the channel; and after pillaging the coast of Gascoigny, returned with their spoils to the port of St. Mahé, in Brittany. Mean-

while the mariners of Portsmouth, and the Cinque Ports, collected eighty stout and well-manned ships, and challenged the French fleet to battle. The challenge was accepted; the fleets assembled round a vessel that had been moored off St. Mahé; and after a long and stubborn contest, English prowess gained the day. Most of the French mariners fell; the English captured every ship; and two hundred and forty prizes arrived safely at the Cinque Ports.

Immediately on receiving this intelligence, Philip sent messengers to demand redress; Edward delayed his answer, and the seneschal of Perigord was directed to take possession of Edward's lands. But by land as by sea the English were victors; Edward's garrisons drove back the invaders, and a summons was thereupon issued for the English king to appear twenty days after Christmas, to answer before his feudal superior for the offences charged against him. To this summons Edward returned a conciliatory answer: he offered to make a compensation to the sufferers, provided the French king, on his part, would allow the same. This was rejected; and the Bishop of London, who had been sent to negotiate, was succeeded by the king's brother, Edmund Crouchback, who, a better knight than statesman, incautiously agreed to surrender Edward's French possessions, as a matter of mere form, for forty days, receiving the French king's assurance, that, at the end of that time, they should be restored. At the end of this period, Philip refused to give Edward repossession of his lands; and, indignant at this unknighly breach of faith, and mortified, not

improbably, at the thought of having been so grossly deceived, Edward postponed his journey to Scotland, and collected a large army for the recapture of Guienne. Ere the army set sail, the Welch, believing Edward to have left England, rose in great numbers; he therefore marched his troops without delay into the mountain fastnesses of Wales, nor turned eastward until the lions of England floated on the heights of Snowdon. Again was Edward preparing to embark his army, when intelligence arrived that a secret alliance had been formed between Scotland and France. He now turned his army northward, arrived at Berwick, which he took, routed the Scots army, received the submission of the chief towns, and deposing Baliol, sent him prisoner to London. After leading his victorious army through the northern parts of Scotland, Edward returned to Berwick, and leaving a strong force there, he again set out for the conquest of Guienne. Here, however, his army was unnecessary; the exertions of Pope Boniface to restore peace, seconded, probably, by the fame of Edward's recent victories, had prevailed on Philip to sign a preliminary treaty, whereby he and Edward consented to refer their differences to the pope "as a private individual;" and Edward returned to lead his army again into Scotland, to quell the insurrection which, during his absence, had again broken out. He landed at Sandwich, proceeded to meet his parliament at York, again crushed the hopes of the Scots at the battle of Falkirk, and with the royal crown and sceptre of the kingdom, and more precious still, the coronation chair, with that

mystic stone that insured to its possessor the dominion of Scotland, Edward returned in triumph to London. Here, according to Master Stowe, goodly pageants welcomed him ; and the fishmongers presented " four gilded sturgeons on four horses, and four silver salmon, " also on four horses, and forty-six knights," riding on horses made like sluices, (most probably " luces" is the proper word) of the sea," and St. Magnus with a gallant train of a thousand horsemen. When, however, we remember that for some time before, Edward had seized the city-charters, and that it was on St. Andrew's day, in this year, that he granted to the barons of the city " all their asking," we may rather view the pageants that welcomed his return, as the expression of the citizens' joy at the recovery of their important privileges, than as arising from exultation at the conquest of Scotland. According to the same authority, Edward offered at St. Edward's shrine the chair and regalia ; but according to Walsingham, he presented the crown to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury, while the others were placed in St. Edward's Chapel, at Westminster, where the ancient chair still remains.

Meanwhile, Boniface published his award, in which it was stipulated, that Guienne should be restored to Edward, as well as certain cities to the earl of Flanders, which Philip had unjustly seized, and that peace should be ratified by the double marriage of the English king with the half-sister of Philip, and of the younger Edward with Isabel, his daughter. This award, which seems to have instantly met the

approval of the English court, excited no little indignation in that of France. According to Mezeray, when the Bishop of Durham, as ambassador, presented it, and that clause was read which decreed the restitution of the Flemish cities to the Earl of Flanders, and gave permission for him to marry his daughter to whoever he might please, the Count of Artois threw himself upon the prelate who was reading the obnoxious decree, "snatched it from him, tore it with his teeth, and threw it into the fire, swearing, that never had a King of France submitted to such shameful conditions, nor ever received law from any one." But however violently his friends might oppose it, Philip seems to have bowed submissively, if not willingly, to the papal award; and negotiations for the arrangement of the two marriages rapidly proceeded.

The princess who was thus chosen to succeed to the crown of the still lamented Elinor of Castile, was the daughter of Philip, surnamed the Hardy, and of his second wife, Mary of Brabant, one of the most beautiful women of her age. A romantic story is told of her, by Nangis, a contemporary chronicler, and which probably was the origin of the many similar stories which we meet with, both in ballad and legend. When the beautiful Mary of Brabant married Philip, there were three sons of the former marriage living. In the following year, Louis, the eldest, died suddenly; and through the machinations of a man, named Pierre de la Brosse, who, from the mean office of barber to the king, had attained the influential station of high chamberlain, the young

and beautiful queen was suspected of having poisoned him. This was a most unlikely charge, since Mary had at this time no son to succeed to the inheritance; while, even if she had, there were two other stepsons remaining. By what means the charge was first hinted, and at length publicly made, we cannot learn; but the influence of de la Brosse over the mind of the king was so great, that Mary of Brabant, ere she had worn the crown two years, was accused of having poisoned the heir to the French throne, and saw before her only the prison and the stake. The Duke of Brabant, her brother, learning the fearful jeopardy in which she stood, immediately sent a knight as her champion, who challenged her accusers to mortal combat. This demand could not be refused. The knight met the champion appointed by her enemies; the right triumphed, the accuser was vanquished, and the king bowed to what was deemed the will of Heaven. Still de la Brosse remained unpunished; and the queen, although clear in the eye of the law, still hoped, rather than expected, that Heaven might interpose to prove beyond all doubt her innocence. And so it came to pass. Many days after, as the king was staying at Melun, a stranger monk demanded instant audience: this was granted; and he placed in the monarch's hand a small box, which he had been commissioned by a messenger who had died in his abbey, to convey with his own hands to the king. The council was summoned, the box opened, and a number of letters, sealed with the private seal of de la Brosse, and conclusive of his guilt, were found. The false accuser was instantly arrested; he

was tried, condemned, and hanged;* and Mary of Brabant passed the remainder of her days in peace.

Margaret, the subject of the present memoir, was the eldest daughter of Mary; but up to the period of her marriage with Edward, we meet with no account of her in the French histories, nor can we even ascertain her age. By the decree of Boniface her dower was fixed at the sum of 15,000 livres (tournois) yearly, about £3750, English money,† and in the *Fœdera* we find the lists of the manors and castles, which were to furnish the required stipend. From this it appears that Edward, unlike his predecessors, did not assign to her “those cities, lands, and tenements, which it had been customary for other Kings to assign to other Queens,” as his father’s charter to Elinor of Provence recites, but that with the exception of Havering in Essex, and one or two smaller manors, the dower consists chiefly of royal castles. The castle and town of Cambridge, of Marlborough, Porchester, Devizes, Southampton, Guildford, Gloucester, and Hertford, are the most important in the list; while with characteristic respect to his intended bride, Edward farther declares, that “abundantly regarding the honor and estate of Margaret,” he augments the dower 3000 livres more, and adds, “and we shall endow the aforesaid Margaret with the above mentioned castles, cities, manors, and towns, *at the church door*, when we shall have espoused her.”

The preliminaries being settled, Margaret was

* Velly, tome iii.

† *Fœdera*, vol. i. p. 912. It appears however that Margaret’s dower in the whole amounted to £4,500 sterling, full £67,500 present money.

conducted to England by the duke of Burgundy, accompanied by the earl of Brittany and a long train of nobles, and she was married to Edward in the presence of most of the English nobility, and many princes from Spain, in Canterbury cathedral, with "abundance of splendor" on the 12th day of September 1299. As no chronicle records her coronation, it most probably took place at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony; and this opinion seems confirmed by the remark of Walsingham, that after four days' festivals, the duke of Burgundy and his train returned, with great delight, and with many right royal gifts.

His alliance with the French king having been thus firmly ratified, Edward again bent his undivided attention to the complete subjugation of Scotland. Almost immediately after his marriage he proceeded to the north, and letters supplicating the prayers of the clergy for his success were issued in October. Determined to leave no method untried for the completion of that object to which Edward now devoted himself with his characteristic impetuosity, he sent about this time a letter to the Pope, which is worthy of notice for the curious proof it gives of the unfaltering credence with which not merely gallant knights and romance-loving ladies, but grave serjeants at law, and right learned judges, regarded "the history of the British kings." In this epistle, the claim to the lordship of Scotland is grounded on the unanswerable argument "that in the time of Eli and Samuel, a brave and illustrious man named Brutus, arrived with many noble Trojans at an island called Albion, and inhabited by giants;

whom he having reduced by his prowess he named the isle Britain; and afterward dividing the kingdom among his three sons, he gave to Locrine, the eldest, the part now called England; to Albanac, the second, the part now called Scotland; and to his youngest son Camber, that part then called Cambria, but now called Wales, reserving to Locrine the royal dignity,"* and therefore in all their subsequent wars homage was demanded by the descendants of the eldest son, and always yielded by the younger.

To the petition of Edward, Boniface returned a favourable answer, and in the prohibition of tournaments, which is dated at the close of the year, and which was repeated two years after, we have proof of the anxiety of the king, that his knights and nobles should hold themselves ready for actual service, instead of amusing themselves with mimic warfare. But the expenses of this war were great; and the taxes which Edward from time to time imposed, seem to have heavily pressed upon the people, and more especially, since a large quantity of foreign coin, chiefly Flemish, but of the basest metal, was at the beginning of this year, in consequence of the

* The whole letter may be seen in Knighton. It is however but fair to remark that other more conclusive claims are advanced in this document, but the subject does not come within the scope of this work. It is curious to observe for how many centuries Geffry of Monmouth's amusing history kept its station as a text-book for every one who boasted the high antiquity of his franchises. Even in the fifteenth century the citizens petitioned for extension of their privileges, asserting that their municipal government was "like and after the manner of old Troy;" and Fortescue, a lord chief justice, gravely remarked that the liberty of the Englishman is clearly accounted for from the unanswerable fact that "the kingdom of England had its origin from Brute and the Trojans, who attended him from Italy and Greece, and became a mixed kind of government compounded of the regal and political."

king's prohibition, withdrawn from circulation.* The loss attendant on this decree, not improbably rendered the payment of the two thousand marks which Edward received as the price of his restoration of the city charters, more burthensome than in former times even a far higher sum might have been. Under this year, that very curious record "the Chronicle of London" informs us that "the men of London wente and searched the church of St. Martin's in the Fields, for tresor of golde, through the words of a gardener who saide there was a *golde-horde*, but they found noughte: wherefore the dean of St. Paules, by command of the archbishop of Canterbury, denounced them all accursed openlye at the crosse of Paules, that searched as was said." This statement is very curious, for it is the first allusion that we meet with, relative to that prevalent superstition, the obtaining of buried treasures by means of charms or spells. That these were the methods employed here, is obvious from ecclesiastical anathema having been denounced against the searchers; since had they sought where they had no legal right, they would have been amenable to the civil power, while had they committed trespass in the church, the ecclesiastical courts would have punished them. It is probable that the notion of a "horde" of treasure near London, was founded on some ancient tradition. A century before, we find in the records

* According to Hemmingford, in four or five pounds weight there was scarcely one penny-weight of silver. He gives a list of the names by which the various species of this worthless coinage were known—pollards, crocards, scaldings, eagles, sleeping lionesses, "they were made by art," says he, "of copper and sulphur silvered."

of the king's court that four jurors were appointed "to say the truth concerning the treasure which William son of Ralph, Richard of Dunstaple, and Roger son of Walter, are said to have taken," and they report that a thief taken at Berkhamstead with much spoil, confessed that he had other treasure, which he had placed at "silver horde" near London, and that the men before named learning this, "are said to have gone to that place by night and there dug,"—with what success, they do not state, but the enquiry is considered of such importance, that the sheriff of Hertford is directed to make inquisition.* Now when we bear in mind that the church of St. Martin's in the Fields stood in the very direction of the ancient road to Berkhamstead, that the same genuine Saxon word is employed to designate the one treasure place and the other, it seems not unlikely that the old and probably half forgotten tradition was revived, just when the exigencies of the citizens urged them to seek about in all possible ways for a supply.

In the following year, according to the same venerable chronicle, "the lady Margaret the queen came, and the citizens rode in gode arraye"—no account of the pageants is however given, and this, together with the passing notice of the birth of her eldest son, Thomas of Brotherton, are the only incidents we meet relating to her in any chronicle, during the first four years of her residence in England.

In 1303 the king's Exchequer at Westminster was broken open and robbed of a very large sum of money

* Rolls of the King's Court, vol. ii. p. 243.

and jewels, which had been laid up there for the expenses of the war in Scotland. Many writers have represented the conduct of Edward toward the abbot and monks of Westminster on this occasion as most tyrannical and unjust; but on reference to the legal proceedings in the case, there certainly appears strong ground of suspicion against the abbot. From these records * we find that one Richard de Podlicote, and William of the palace, who was gardener, were indeed principals in the robbery, but that Adam de Warefeld, sacristan of the convent of Westminster, and Alexander Pershore, the sub-prior, were assistants. The treasure mentioned in those enquiries consists of silver dishes, ewers and basins, gold cups, clasps, and rings, together with large quantities of precious stones and pearls. These, Richard de Podlicote appears to have sold amongst the London goldsmiths; and the general diffusion of wealth at this period is strongly marked in the fact that a stranger could offer for sale without suspicion, "a silver dish fifteen pounds weight," and rubies, pearls, and emeralds by the dozen. It will excite surprise too in the reader to

* Ancient Kalendars and Inventories of the Exchequer, vol. i. Appendix.—One of the goldsmiths who had purchased some of these stolen jewels, Thomas de Frowyk, sends subsequently a piteous petition to the king, stating that he had made a golden crown for Queen Margaret, by order dated February 1303, against the feast of St. John the Baptist, and which was to be paid for at Michaelmas, but that no payment had been made, "whereby he suffers great loss." Robert le Convers too, prays payment for £54 11s. 4d. for "sixteen silver cups, well gilt," purchased for the said lady, Queen Margaret, at the same time. As he, as well as Frowyk, appears in the inquisitions as a purchaser of the stolen jewels, it is probable that some obstacles were placed in their way by the king's household. The answer is in both cases favourable; they are directed to take their bills to the clerk at the King's Exchange, adding to them other charges for cups and vases, which amount in each case to £440.—Vide Parl. Rolls, vol. i. p. 474.

learn, that when this "enormous thief" was unable to dispose of more of his plunder in London, he went to Northampton, and even there found purchasers sufficiently wealthy to buy "right royal" jewels. In the course of the enquiry a large number are implicated, both men and women; eventually the abbot and prior of Westminster, as well as several of the monks, are committed to the Tower, while the laymen are sent to "the new prison beside Newgate." With the liberation, a short time after, of the abbot and prior, of the goldsmiths who had purchased the plate and jewels, and who all, abbot as well as layman, provide from eight to twelve manucaptors each, the proceedings conclude; and it is from the chroniclers we learn that Edward kept twelve of the monks in the Tower until the year 1305, when, attending at Westminster Abbey on Lady-day, to return thanks for his victories over the Scots, he ordered them to be discharged.

But the robbery of his Exchequer, and his contests with his clergy, were trifling annoyances, compared with the gloomy forebodings with which he regarded the conduct of his eldest son. This son, now twenty years of age, had always been distinguished by his love of low company and rude sports. In company with an esquire of Gascony, Piers Gaveston, he had broken into the bishop of Chester's parks; and on the bishop's complaint, Edward, with that stern love of justice which commands our respect, had sentenced him, although heir to the crown, to imprisonment. But even so severe a sentence failed in its effect on the weak and wayward mind of Edward of Caernarvon. From the Placita Rolls we find that another charge

was subsequently brought against him, that of having used abusive words toward one of his father's ministers; and he was "expelled from the king's household for nearly half a year, nor suffered to re-enter his presence until he had rendered satisfaction to the said officer for his offence." In the year 1305 therefore, the king outlawed his son's chief favourite Gaveston, "because he gave bad counsel to his son, who loved him with inordinate affection;" and happy had it been for the second Edward, and happy had it been for England, if that worthless favourite had never again returned.

It was probably with the hope of arousing in the mind of his son some spark of chivalrous feeling, that Edward soon after caused proclamation to be made throughout England, that all persons entitled to the honour of knighthood, should at the feast of Pentecost repair to Westminster, and there receive it. And with a magnificence that anticipates the splendid era of the third Edward, were the preparations for this high festival arranged. The palace of Westminster not affording sufficient room for the multitudes that flocked thither, the noble house of the Templars was also appropriated for their reception; but even this spacious mansion was inadequate to contain the vast company, and the walls of the Temple garden were levelled, and even the trees cut down, to afford room for the tents and pavilions of the knightly aspirants. According to the usage of chivalry, the expectant knights kept their vigil of arms in the Temple church, but the prince, by express command of the king, performed his vigil in the chapel of his titular saint, Edward,—the place where the ashes of

his grandfather, his elder brother, and his mother reposed.

Early on the following morning, nearly three hundred young esquires, accompanied by their sponsors, entered the Abbey-church of Westminster, and in turn advanced to the altar. The religion of the middle ages, as we have seen, was emphatically a religion of symbols, and it is curious to observe how symbolical was every rite of chivalric inauguration. The esquire had bathed, in token of washing away the sins of his former life ; he was clad in a white robe, the emblem of purity, the red mantle thrown over him, marked his resolution to shed his blood in the cause of Heaven, and the severed lock of hair, was the symbol of his servitude to God. Then the aspirant taking his sword from the scarf, gave it to the priest, who laid it on the altar, "praying that it might serve for a protection of the church, of widows and orphans, and all the servants of God ;" and then the young soldier took the beautiful oaths of chivalry,—to aid and maintain the right, to succour the destitute, to honour all ladies, to love poor men, to punish all those who would wrong the widow and orphan, and "with all this to love the holy church." The sword was now re-delivered to the esquire, and the religious ceremonial being ended, he advanced to the monarch or to his liege lord, and knelt as his vassal before him with clasped hands. He was now invested by the knights and ladies present with the shield, the sword, the helmet, the coat of mail, the lance, and that appropriated symbol of the knight, the gilded spurs ; then the accolade, a slight blow on the neck with the

sword, was given by the lord or monarch, and the new made knight rose from his knees to receive the welcome of his brothers in arms. According to Matthew of Westminster, nearly three hundred knights on this occasion received the accolade from Edward, who conferred, in addition to knighthood, the dukedoms of Cornwall and Aquitaine on his son ; and among these knights were two, who in after years were to become the chief favourite, and the deadliest enemy, of that prince with whom they were now associated as brothers in arms—the younger Despenser, and Roger Mortimer. A melancholy circumstance is reported to have taken place on this solemn festival ; so crowded was the Abbey-church with spectators, and so eager was the crowd withoutside to press in, that it was with great difficulty the royal train could reach the altar, and two young knights were actually stifled.

But the splendid show was incomplete, unless the banquet, and the vows of the new-made knights, in presence of the assembled ladies and nobles, followed. Two swans therefore, covered with golden nets embossed with rich goldsmith's-work, were brought in ; and then, the warrior king rising, took the vow "before heaven and the swans," that he would avenge the assassination of Comyn, and recover Scotland from the power of de Bruce.* "The same vowed all the knights present, to the which they prepared themselves on the following year," says Murimuth ; and

* Vide Matthew of Westminster, p. 457. Instances of vows being taken in the presence of the peacock or heron are very numerous. The reason of Edward's vow being made before the swan, was probably in consequence of "the white swan" being his cognizance, as it was also of his son and grandson.

other chroniclers relate, that the prince himself, aroused to a momentary glow of chivalrous feeling by the imposing scene around him, swore that he would never rest two nights in one place, until his father's vow was fulfilled.

The transition from the gorgeous festival to the cloister, was in these times far from uncommon, and we but follow the example of the subject of the present memoir, in turning from the feasts and chivalrous sports of the palace of Westminster, to visit the house of the Grey-Friars beside Newgate. To the Grey-Friars or Franciscans, queen Margaret was strongly attached; and as it was by her munificence that their splendid church was built, a short notice of them, and their establishments, will not be out of place here.

In the year 1224 five brothers of this order came to England, and hired a small house in Cornhill, from whence in the following year they removed to the parish of St. Nicholas Shambles, where John Iwyn, a physician and citizen, established them in his own house, and became a lay brother. The progress of this order was from henceforth rapid; "these preaching brethren, who are called the Minors by favour of Innocent," says Matthew Paris, "came quietly into notice, and filled the whole earth; they inhabited towns and cities, went barefooted, living in the garb and on the food of poverty, possessing nothing, and setting a great example of humility, and on the Sundays and festivals they went forth from their mean habitations, to preach in the parish churches the Gospel of the Word, and ate and drank

whatever was placed before them." Their humble deportment, and their preaching talents, most probably attracted the friendly notice of the middle and lower orders; while the genius and profound learning of many of the Grey brethren, awakened the interest of some of the dignitaries of the church. Among their earliest patrons in England the celebrated bishop Grostête may be placed, while archbishop Peckham, who had in early life belonged to their order, was their unceasing friend. During the whole of the thirteenth century gifts and bequests poured in upon them, and from that period they were viewed with jealous hostility by the established Benedictines. Meanwhile houses for the reception of the brothers of this order were built in most of the chief towns of England; and the establishment in London was enlarged until it rivalled in extent the neighbouring convents. Although the male Benedictines refused their aid, the female convents seem to have willingly assisted their Grey brethren, and the names of two prioresses of Clerkenwell and two prioresses of Holywell are to be found in the list of benefactors to the house of the Grey-Friars. The gifts and benefactions of the citizens were also numerous; and at length, under the patronage of the queen, they commenced building their great church, which subsequently became one of the chief ornaments of old London, and which in size was inferior only to the cathedral. This year (1306) therefore, Sir William Walden, in the name of the queen, laid the first stone, with the splendid donation of two thousand marks, a sum equal to £20,000 present money. The duke of Brittany

laid the second stone, and, together with the earl of Gloucester and other nobles, offered munificently toward the building; the church, however, was not completed until many years after. Ere passing on, it may be mentioned here, that in 1293 Blanche, queen of Navarre, the second wife of Edmund Crouchback, by permission of Edward, had founded a house for female Franciscans, or sisters of St. Clare, or Minoresses, as they were also called, near Aldgate, and dedicated it "to the service of God, St. Mary, and St. Clare." This house was so richly endowed by her, and by several citizens, that its inmates, together with those of the two sister establishments of Waterbeach and Brise-yard, bore the title of "the rich Clares," and Boniface the Eighth confirmed to this house, by three bulls, a long bead-roll of privileges, which rendered the sisters wholly independent of any ecclesiastical rule, save that of their order. Of the house of the sisters of St. Clare not a vestige remains, but its remembrance is preserved in the name still given to the site on which it formerly stood, the Minories; while the lordly establishment of the Grey-Friars, although changed from its original destination, still retains in one important respect its ancient character, its estates, and its convent, having been given by Edward the Sixth to that valuable institution, Christ's Hospital.

The following year saw Edward depart on his last expedition to Scotland, whither it is probable Margaret accompanied him, since we find in the Chronicle of London, that the earl of Athol having been adjudged to die the death of a traitor, the queen inter-

posed her gentle influence, and although unable to obtain the reversal of his doom, induced Edward to mitigate the sentence to hanging. During the summer Margaret appears to have been in London : for in a curious precept addressed by Edward to the mayor and sheriffs, and which strongly exhibits the kind and watchful attention of the king toward her, he states that as " our most beloved consort will in a short time come to the Tower of London, and will there remain for a certain time : we, fearing the dangers which our consort and her attendant nobles may incur from the infection and corruption of the air by access of petitioners from the city, and from other places near the Tower, we command you to proclaim publicly in the city, that no petitioner should presume to come thither, or others belonging to them, in any way whereby the air may be infected or corrupted, on pain of heavy forfeiture." This precept is dated at Carlisle, June 28th, and, as it was the hot season, a period in earlier times frequently characterized by the prevalence of infectious fevers, Edward seems to have feared some danger to the queen of this kind, since no chronicler makes mention of " pestilence" during this year. The foregoing precept affords us incidentally a pleasing view of queen Margaret's character. Unless her kindliness and charitable disposition had been well known, such a precept would have been unnecessary ; and it also affords another instance of the courteous bearing of sovereigns at this early period ;—what would modern society say to a similar precept ? But in those times, the poorest and the meanest claimed access to the sovereign as

his absolute right ; and the queen saw her palace hall crowded with supplicants, and frequently stopped her palfrey to receive the rude petition of the way-faring man, who had journeyed hundreds of miles to obtain that redress from the sovereign, which his feudal lord had denied him.*

The foregoing precept is one of the last dated in England. On the feast of St. Michael, Edward crossed the border, and remained in the marches of Scotland all the winter. With the advance of spring his health rapidly declined ; and on the feast of the translation of St. Thomas à Becket (July 7), he died. According to Walsingham, Edward with his last words exhorted his son, " to be just and courteous ; he committed to his care his two young brothers, bade him display the love and honour of a good son toward his mother, queen Margaret, and commanded him, on pain of his irrevocable malediction, never to recal Piers Gaveston." He farther said, that he had intended to proceed to the Holy Land, but that Bruce had prevented him, and he had therefore collected £32,000 " of silver," to support seven score knights honourably in that land, with their families, which he directed his son to do. Immediately on his decease, the body was conveyed by the treasurer of the household, the bishop of Chester, accompanied by the royal suite, to Waltham Abbey, where it remained until the new king had received the oaths of allegiance from his nobles in England and Scotland, had ordained keepers in Scotland, and had held his first

* The Rolls of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries furnish us with many instances of the easy access of petitioners, however humble, to the sovereign.

parliament at Northampton. These preliminaries having been completed, in the month of October, the arrangements for the funeral were made. The body was conveyed with great pomp to London, where the first night it rested in the church of the Holy Trinity, beside Aldgate, on the second, in St. Paul's, from whence, on the third day, it was removed to the church of the Grey-Friars, (probably at the express request of queen Margaret,) where masses having been said, it was conveyed in a car to its place of sepulture, at Westminster. "Here, on the morrow," Hemingford, with great satisfaction, remarks, "five solemn masses were said by five bishops, besides that mass which the cardinal of Spain celebrated early in the morning for him. The patriarch of Jerusalem" (the celebrated and belligerent Antony Bec, bishop of Durham) "performed the funeral service; and the ministers at the altar were also two bishops, the bishop of Winchester, who read the gospel, and the bishop of Lincoln, who read the epistle. And thus was that most valiant, most wise, most sagacious king, laid among his fathers, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign."* The body of this illustrious monarch

* Vide Hemingford.—In 1774, the tomb of king Edward was opened in the presence of the dean, and some members of the Antiquarian Society, when the body was found enclosed in a "large square mantle of linen, waxed on the inside. The head, on which was a crown of copper gilt, and face were covered with a crimson silk, and the body was swathed in cere-cloth of very fine linen; even the fingers and face being so neatly wrapt, that every part was visible. A tunic of red silk damaask enveloped the body, upon which lay a kind of scarf of white silk tissue, three inches in breadth, worked with an elegant pattern of very small mock pearl, and having, at intervals of about six inches, gilt quatrefoils of fillagree-work, delicately chased, and ornamented with glass imitations of gems, very well executed, and each set in a raised socket; some of

was buried in the Confessor's chapel ; but no splendid tomb graced his memory. Five large slabs of Purbeck marble, standing on a similar basement, and forming a double step above the pavement, is the only memorial which his unworthy son caused to be erected, and which still remains.

From the period of king Edward's death, we can find scarcely any notice of Margaret of France. She appears to have retired to one of her castles, and there, engaged in the care of her two young sons, and in the services of religion and charity, to have passed her days. In the tenth year of Edward the Second, we find her claiming from the mayor and aldermen of London, £2,000, which is alleged to be still due to her, on account of a tax of a twentieth on all men's goods levied by the late king. This claim was refused ; and the king directed that it should be instantly paid, "if it appeared to the barons of the Exchequer to be due;" but the laborious research of Prynne cannot discover the result. That result, however, was of little consequence to Margaret ; for early in the following year, in February, 1318, she died at Marlborough, leaving two sons, the eldest,

these imitated rubies, some emeralds, and some sapphires. On the left shoulder, the royal mantle of rich crimson satin was fastened, with a brooch, of large size and beautiful workmanship, adorned with red and blue stones and mock pearl ; it is four inches in diameter, while the pin is formed by a long piece of blue glass, shaped like an acorn, and fixed in a chased socket. The body from the waist was wrapped in a rich figured cloth of gold vestment, which wholly enveloped the feet ; on each hand lay a quatrefoil, similar to those just described, and which, probably, had belonged to the 'jewelled gloves,' a royal distinction at this period ; and a sceptre and rod, with dove of white enamel, lay on each side." This account is taken from the narrative of Sir Joseph Ayloffe, who was present, and it affords an interesting picture of the royal apparel more than five hundred years since. It is also interesting, as showing how many arts, which are deemed of very modern invention, claim, indeed, a high antiquity.

Thomas of Brotherton, who subsequently became earl of Norfolk and marshal of England, and Edmund of Woodstock, afterwards created earl of Kent, who took a prominent part in the contests of the second Edward's reign. Margaret also bore a daughter, who was named by the king, in memory of her whom he never ceased to love, Elinor, but she died in infancy.

The body of queen Margaret, as we learn from the wardrobe accounts of Edward the Second, was conveyed from Marlborough to London; Sir John Hausted having first, by the king's order, "laid upon the body two pieces of Lucca cloth." Five days afterwards, a service was performed in the church of St. Mary Overy, when "three pieces of Lucca cloth" were offered by the king; and the body was finally deposited in the still unfinished church of the Grey-Friars, which had been founded by her munificence;—the king, on the day of burial, offering "six pieces of Lucca cloth," "the lady Mary, his sister, the nun at Amesbury," two, and Sir Roger Damori, who probably was superintendant of Margaret's household, also two. A magnificent tomb before the high altar was erected to her memory; and there, duly remembered in the daily services of the Grey brethren, Margaret of France reposed, until at the Reformation the noble church was despoiled, unroofed, and in great part pulled down; the rich alabaster tomb of its foundress broken in pieces, and her bones cast out into common ground.

ISABEL OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER XVII.

Edward's First Measures—His Marriage—The Coronation Oath—Exile of Gaveston—Petition of Parliament—Recal of Gaveston—Earl Thomas of Lancaster—Execution of Gaveston—The Despensers—Progress of dissatisfaction—Execution of Earl Thomas—of Harclay—The Degradation of a Knight—Seizure of Isabel's lands—Her Journey to France—Embassy to compel her Return—Petition of Parliament—Edward's Letters—Her Flight to Hainault—Sir John of Hainault offers himself as her Knight—Her Triumphant Return to England—Deposition of the King—Was Isabel accessory to his Death?—Testimony of Contemporary Writers—The Fall of Mortimer—Charter of her Dower—Appointed Ambassadress to France—Her Death—Funeral—Concluding Remarks.

WITH the accession of Edward the Second we enter upon a stormy but important period of English history. The wise, valiant, but tyrannical monarch, who was feared alike at home and abroad, he whose stern rule curbed the most refractory of his nobles, and the haughtiest of his prelates, was succeeded by a weak-minded, indolent son, whose low habits excited the contempt of his court, while his inordinate attachment to favourites awakened that jealousy which eventually brought ruin both on himself and them. Still, as in the case of his grandfather, the inefficient rule of Edward of Caernarvon conferred, through its very inadequacy, important benefits on the land. During his strifes with his nobles, "the commons" took as of right that station which the first Edward only reluctantly, and as of favour, conceded to them;

while their representatives, appealed to alike by king and nobles, began to couple petitions for redress of grievances with grants of supplies, and to take the first steps towards the attainment of that valuable right which they achieved in the following reign,—the power of impeaching public counsellors. As the biography of Isabel of France is so interwoven with the political history of the land, it will be necessary to depart more widely in this chapter from the prescribed plan of this work, and to trace the public events of those eighteen years of misrule, which yet prepared the way for the long and prosperous reign of Edward the Third.

The first acts of Edward the Second's reign, were to imprison his father's chief minister, and to reverse the sentence of outlawry passed against the profligate Gascon, Piers Gaveston. This latter act in itself was sufficient to excite the indignation alike of nobles and people, when it is remembered how solemnly the father on his death-bed had pledged his son never to recal him. But Edward of Caernarvon, with that perversity which perhaps as often characterises the weak as the wicked, was not content with a bare reversal of the sentence ;—the restored favourite was welcomed with every expression of honour and attachment ; the earldom of Cornwall, hitherto a royal title, was bestowed on him ; he was married, by the king's special appointment, to the daughter of the countess of Gloucester, the king's own sister ; gifts were showered upon him from the royal treasury,* and from henceforth "all things were ruled by Piers'

* In the Issue Roll of Edward the Second, first year, we find £500 paid to Gaveston, "which he had lent to the lord king."

counsel." Early in the following year Edward set forth to complete his marriage with Isabel, according to the contract signed by his father ten years before, and on January 28th, 1308, with great splendour "in the presence of four kings and three queens," as the chroniclers proudly remark, he married her in the church of Our Lady at Boulogne.

No information can be obtained of Isabel's early life; she was the daughter of Philip le Bel, king of France, and of Joan, sole daughter and heiress of the king of Navarre. Her maternal grandmother therefore was Blanche of Navarre, the second wife of Edmund Crouchback, and foundress of the house of the Minoresses, and thus earl Thomas of Lancaster, who will occupy a prominent station in these pages, was her uncle. It is difficult to ascertain the age of Isabel; several historians, and Sandford in his Genealogical History, represent her as only twelve years old at the time of her marriage, while some of the French writers consider her to have been much older; as however she is represented by Walsingham as mediating between the king and his nobles in 1313, an office which would scarcely have been undertaken by a girl of seventeen, while in the contract between Edward and Philip, dated 1298, she is stated to be "under seven years of age," it is most probable that she was sixteen or seventeen years old at the time of her marriage. Of her dower too, we have no information, save that in the contract before referred to, Edward agrees to grant his future daughter-in-law castles and manors to the amount of 10,000 livres (tournois) or £2,500 per annum.

The marriage of Edward and Isabel was followed in the succeeding month by their coronation, which was marked by great magnificence. From the Issue Roll we find that £200 was paid to the drapers of London for providing cloth, £200 for *poultry*, and £100 for "large cattle and boars;" there are many other entries which prove the gigantic scale of the coronation feast, among which may be noticed £50 for wood and coals alone. The coronation took place at Westminster on the 20th of February, when the bishop of Winchester, in the absence of the archbishop of Canterbury (who had been exiled by the late king), performed the ceremony: and in the questions which he then put to the new king, and which are carefully recorded both in Latin and French, we perceive the strong anxiety of the leading nobles, that Edward should be pledged, at the very altar, to protect the liberties of the land.

"Sir, will you grant, and guard, and confirm by your oath to the people of England, the laws and the customs granted to them by the ancient kings of England,—namely, the laws, the customs, and the franchises granted to the clergy, and to the people, by the glorious king St. Edward, your predecessor?" and the king replied, "*Jeo le graunt e promette.*" "Sir, will you cause open and straightforward justice to be done in all your judgments, in discretion, in mercy, and in truth?" and again was the promise given. "Sir, will you agree to hold and maintain the laws, and the rightful customs which the commonalty of your kingdom shall have enacted; and defend and enforce them for the honour of God, ac-

ording to your power?" and again was the solemn pledge given.

But of little avail were these solemn promises, as the country too soon discovered. Even on that very day the honours he bestowed on Gaveston, showed how little inclined was the weak and wayward king to yield to public opinion. In the solemn procession, the upstart favourite was selected to walk immediately before the king! the place appropriated only to the highest nobility, bearing that precious relic the crown of Edward the Confessor; and although the chief nobles of England, and Charles, afterwards king of France, and the earl of Luxembourg, afterwards emperor of Germany, and the duke of Brittany, and Louis, uncle to the queen, were present, "yet," remarks the indignant chronicler, "Piers de Gaveston in noble apparel transcended them all." * This insolent conduct in an age distinguished by strict attention to sumptuary laws, while it excited the anger of the English nobility, aroused the bitterest feelings of Louis of France, who doubtless foresaw little probability of happiness for his young niece, while her husband was thus meanly swayed by his favourite. He therefore peremptorily demanded that Gaveston should be exiled; but it does not appear that Edward yielded; the parliament however shortly after met, and sentenced him to banishment. Thus foiled by his parliament, Edward determined to neutralize as far as possible their sentence; he therefore appointed him governor of Ireland, assigning him the whole of its dues, himself accompanied his banished favourite

* Murimuth.

as far as Bristol, and sent him forth as viceroy to his place of exile, "where," says the chronicler, "he lived in royal splendour." Thus, from the earliest days of her marriage, the young and beautiful Isabel, a stranger in a strange land, saw herself an unloved and neglected wife.

The whole of the succeeding year was passed in efforts on the part of Edward to recal his favourite, and stern resistance on the part of his nobles. His parliament too began to hold a tone very different to what had been held in the time of his father, while "the commons," who in the preceding reign had scarcely been recognised, except for the purpose of taxation, now in granting the twenty-fifth penny of their goods, coupled their grants with the condition, "that the king should take advice, and grant redress upon certain articles wherein they are aggrieved." "The good people of England," say they, "who are come hither to parliament, pray our lord the king, if it will please him to have regard to his poor subjects, who are much aggrieved by reason that they are not governed as they should be; especially as to the articles of the great charter, and for this, if it please him, they pray remedy. Besides which they pray their lord the king to hear what has long aggrieved his people, and still does so from day to day, on the part of those who call themselves his officers, and to amend it if he pleases." Then follow eleven articles, among which are complaints against the king's purveyors, complaints which were only remedied centuries afterward by the utter abolition of the office,—charges against the high officers of the king's house-

hold for arbitrary conduct, which prove that the principles of liberty were recognised by the people; and complaints of the deterioration of the coinage, and exactions of new customs on imported goods, which proved the advancing mercantile spirit. Edward answered this unlooked-for remonstrance favourably, and with the exception of that relating to the customs, he promised speedy redress of their grievances. The augmented customs on imports he found too beneficial to his treasury to relinquish, and the following year he issued writs to collect those new customs again, but they were superseded by the lords' ordainers.*

Not long after, Edward, in defiance of his nobles, recalled Gaveston, who again became "confidant and ruler of the king, whereat almost all the lords and prelates were greatly annoyed." Nor was it strange that they should be; Gaveston had been welcomed back by the king with the most disgraceful fondness, and viewing his royal master's infatuated attachment as a licence to act as he pleased, he insulted the first nobles of the land, set the laws at defiance, and continued his former habits of rapacity and extravagance.† The parliament again met, Gaveston was formally arraigned on charges of giving the king bad counsel, obtaining his treasure, alienating the king from the people, and among other charges, of "maintaining robbers and homicides, and sealing blank charters with the great seal." On these grounds Gaveston was

* Vide Hallam, vol. iii. p. 58.

† Before his exile to Ireland he is stated to have conveyed the "table and trestlyds of gold from the treasury of Westminster, and delyvered them" to a messenger to be carried into Gascony; and the treasure he sent abroad altogether, is valued at £100,000.

sentenced to perpetual exile ; and it was enacted, that if he remained in England, he should be treated as an enemy to the king, the kingdom, and the people. In tracing Gaveston's ultimate fate, it is proper to bear in mind the fact, that this sentence was never *legally* revoked. The subsequent proceedings of the parliament showed the distrust and contempt which were felt for the king,—he was restrained from even going out of the kingdom, except by agreement of his barons in parliament, who were almost elevated to the office of regents.

Among the barons who distinguished themselves in these proceedings against the royal favourite were, the earl of Arundel, a noble of large possessions, the earl of Warwick, also a most powerful nobleman, de Valence, earl of Pembroke, grandson of Isabel of Angoulême, by her second marriage, de Bohun, earl of Hereford, who was allied to the king, and chief among them, earl Thomas of Lancaster. This illustrious nobleman, who according to Walsingham “ was rich in treasure, noble in lineage, valiant in arms, and pre-excellent in conduct and principles,” was first cousin to the king, being the eldest son of Edmund Crouchback, whom he succeeded in the three earldoms of Lancaster, Leicester, and Ferrars. On his mother's side he was son, half-brother, and uncle, to three queens, Blanche of Navarre, Joan heiress of Navarre and queen of France, and Isabel queen of England, and his already immense estates were further increased by his marriage with the heiress of de Lacie, earl of Salisbury and Lincoln.* A man so nobly

* Master Stowe, to whose minute particularity the inquirer into the

and so royally connected, would scarcely have taken a prominent part in public affairs, unless urged by principle, and Walsingham relates that the dying injunction of his father-in-law de Lacie, first induced him to come forth "to repair the evils which misgovernment had brought on the kingdom." It is therefore stated that he, in the first instance, "sent honourable messengers to the king to cause him to exile Gaveston, but the king, led away by sinister counsels," refused to profit by the wise advice, and from henceforward earl Thomas of Lancaster became unremitting in his endeavours to rescue his cousin from the bondage of his favourite.

When the sentence upon Gaveston was passed, he withdrew to France. Here the king, most probably indignant that the man who had caused his daughter's unhappiness should seek refuge in his dominions, gave orders for his seizure, and it was only by flight into Flanders that the exiled favourite escaped. Whether privately summoned by the king, or presuming upon that deluded monarch's fatuity, Gaveston soon after suddenly returned to England; and sometimes secreted in the king's chamber, sometimes at Wal-

customs of past times is so greatly indebted, under the head of "Noble Housekeeping in London," gives a full account of the expenses of this earl Thomas, at Christmas 1312. In this curious document the expenses of the kitchen amount to £3,405, a sum equal to nearly £50,000 present money, and among the items are 369 pipes of wine; six barrels of sturgeons, and 6,000 salted fish; 2,319 pounds of tallow candles, and 1,870 pounds of white wax candles, called "Paris lights," besides 1,714 pounds of wax vermilion and turpentine, which probably were for the purpose of making red wax lights. The charge of the earl's "great horses" and grooms' wages is £436, a sum equal to nearly £7,000, while the liveries for his household at Christmas amount to £700, nearly £12,000. From these last entries we find that the officers of his household consisted of 70 knights and barons, 28 esquires, 15 chaplains, 15 officers, whose station is not specified, 19 principal grooms, and 4 minstrels.

lingford, and sometimes seeking the more distant asylum of Tintagel Castle, he continued not indeed unsuspected, but undiscovered. He now made an ineffectual attempt to obtain shelter in Scotland; but the answer of Bruce, as recorded by the monk of Malmesbury, a contemporary, proves forcibly the view which the monarchs of that day took of his case. "How can the king of England keep his treaty with *me*, if he does not keep his oath to his own liegemen?" was the emphatic reply. At length weary of lying hidden, he appeared, with a second sentence of outlawry still unrepealed hanging over him, at court, and was received by the unworthy monarch with unrestrained joy.

The justly enraged barons now assembled; the archbishop of Canterbury excommunicated Gaveston; but unmoved by the threatening storm, Edward spent his Christmas and remained until spring at York, in feasting and merriment, celebrating the churching of his favourite's wife, with a magnificence which could scarcely have been exceeded had the queen herself been the object.* As spring advanced the barons put themselves in warlike array, and the earl of Lancaster having proclaimed a tournament, as a pretext for their assembling in arms, they

* For this instance of Edward's contempt of public opinion, we are indebted to the additional wardrobe account printed in Brayley's "Illustrator." Among these accounts is the entry—"Forty marks to king Robert, and other minstrels, playing before the king and other nobles, in the house of the friars minors at York, on the day of the churching of the countess of Cornwall." Thus a sum equal to 400*l.* was expended on minstrels alone; this is dated February 20th, 1311-12. There is a previous entry, dated in September, in which 2*s.* are given to "Walter the saddler, a forester of Shirewood," coming to the king at Hadley, with letters from Gaveston, "beseeching pardon for *having slain a man*." Might not this have probably been in some ineffectual attempt to seize him soon after his return?

marched toward York. Whether Edward quitted that city on learning their intentions, is uncertain ; that Gaveston did, seems probable, from an entry in the wardrobe accounts, which states, Geoffry de Sel-ling, butler to the countess, received, "for bringing good news of the earl," £50 ! a sum so extravagant, that it is only to be accounted for by supposing that the favourite had escaped some great and imminent danger. During this time we find no notice of Isabel ; as however she is soon after represented as being at Tynemouth, she was probably at York, and accompanied Edward on his flight toward the north. He however soon separated from her, and again sought the company of his favourite at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where they remained until Ascension-day. Earl Thomas of Lancaster now collected his forces, and advanced toward Newcastle, "and when the king heard this," says Walsingham, "he fled with Piers swiftly to Tynemouth, where having gained ready admission, he demanded a vessel, and though the pregnant queen with many tears prayed him to stay with her, he had not the least pity for her, but taking Piers, sailed for Scarborough." The unhappy young queen however received more protection and respect from the confederated barons, than from him who was her legal protector. Lancaster sent a message of condolence, but he refrained from visiting her, "lest," according to Trokelowe, "he should awaken the king's anger against her."

But Edward's solicitude for that unworthy favourite for whose safety he had deserted his wife, was vain. The castle, though strong, had no provisions, and

pursued by the barons, Edward was at length compelled to fly to York, leaving Gaveston behind. The king now sought to enter into negotiations with the barons, and according to Murimuth commissioned the earl of Pembroke to bring Gaveston from thence. According to Moor, the earl swore that he would keep him safe for a certain time, but as no other chronicler records this circumstance, it is scarcely fair to charge de Valence, although his conduct all along was far from chivalrous, with perjury. That he performed his office carelessly and unwillingly, there is however full reason to believe. On the road at Dadington, between Oxford and Warwick, Pembroke left his charge with a slender guard; and at dawn, earl Guy of Warwick, "with a crowd of the commons, and hue and cry, surprised Piers, and led him to the castle of Warwick." There, the confederated nobles were assembled, and they deliberated on what was to be done; when unwilling, it would seem, to order his execution of themselves, they directed him to be sent forth from the castle, where the hue and cry, "with voice, and horns, legitimately seized him as a traitor and outlaw," says Murimuth, "and having led him to a place called Blakelow, struck off his head."* "Thus," says Walsingham, "did he who erst called the earl of Warwick the black dog of Arderne, feel himself in that earl's most bitter

* It is difficult to ascertain why so many historians have considered the execution of Gaveston as a murder. As his last sentence of outlawry remained unreversed, his life was already forfeited, and indeed might justifiably be taken by any one. This seems to have been the reason of the barons refusing to interfere in his death. He was already dead in the eye of the law, and therefore in giving him up to instant execution by those who had already pursued and taken him, they merely suffered the law to take its course.

gripe." The head was conveyed by a Grey-friar in his hood to the king, and some of the same order subsequently arriving from Oxford, took the body, and buried it in their church there. The anger of the king, when he learnt the death of his favourite, was deep, but he remained quiet, as the same chronicler remarks, meditating revenge.

On St. Brice's day, an heir to the crown, the illustrious Edward the Third, was born at Windsor. On this occasion Louis, king of Navarre, brother to the queen, being there, it was proposed that the infant should be named after him; but the English nobles interfered, and "would not permit it," demanding he should bear a truly English name, and one already endeared to the whole nation, who viewed the Confessor as the framer of these apocryphal laws, which they boasted conferred such extensive privileges on Englishmen.;

Early in the following year a parliament was held at London, to whom the king bitterly complained of the contempt to his nobles, and their injurious conduct toward him, especially "in the seizure and impious murder" of his favourite. The barons replied, that what they had done was for the safety of the realm, of which Gaveston was the public enemy. The contest was carried on with great violence, but at length, by the earnest mediation of the queen, aided by the prelates and the earl of Gloster, the "rancour of the king's mind was subdued, and the barons came to Westminster-hall in full parliament and submitted themselves."*

* Walsingham.

Although subsequent events proved that the apparent reconciliation of the king with his nobles was only feigned on his part, the war in Scotland, and the disastrous battle of Bannockburn, left him no time during the following year to pursue his revenge. The succession of a new pope seems to have excited in Edward's mind a desire to obtain that papal favour, of which, in future contests with his nobles, he might avail himself most largely. He, therefore, sent over the most splendid and costly presents by the hands of Sir John Benstede and Master Burton, and the list affords much curious information as to the kind of presents which monarchs at this period were accustomed to offer to the head of the Latin church. Among these we find "a gold ewer, enamelled with *clear* enamel," weighing more than four pounds, and a gold basin, similarly enamelled, weighing above five pounds; and this gorgeous present, we are expressly informed, was the work of "Roger de Frowyk, goldsmith, of London." The "fine needlework," of Englishwomen, was also on this occasion sought for, and a magnificent cope, embroidered and studded with large white pearls, was purchased of the executors of Catherine Lincoln, at the enormous price of 146*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, between two and three thousand pounds present money. Another cope was sent by Isabel, and this was also the work of an Englishwoman, Rose de Bureford, wife of John de Bureford, citizen and merchant, of London; and for this the sum of 100 marks (1000*l.*) was paid. Isabel also sent an incense-boat, a ewer, and a gold buckle set with pearls, value 300*l.* (4,500*l.*) Alto-

gether the presents sent on this occasion could have cost little less than 30,000*l.* present money.*

These splendid presents, sent at a time when the country was suffering from a failing harvest, most probably excited the popular indignation. The people began to clamour, and "a rybaulde," named John Tanner, appeared, laying claim to the crown, declaring that he was king Edward's son, but his nurse having, through negligence, suffered "a sowe to sore rend him," when he was in the cradle, she, fearing punishment, exchanged him with a tanner's son of the same age. This homely story met with many believers among the populace, to whom John the Tanner exhibited the scars of the injuries inflicted by the sow, arguing that "king Edward's manners were according to his fader's, forasmoche as he loved swiche rude workes,"—an important corroboration of the charge afterwards made by Isabel against him, that he was of low and brutal habits.

This "rybaulde" was soon after taken, and hanged at Northampton;† but heedless of pleasing the people, Edward celebrated his Christmas with great magnificence at Windsor; and ere the feastings were over, he summoned the archbishop of Canterbury, and many prelates and abbots, and caused the body of his favourite to be conveyed, with royal splendour, from the church of the Friars Preachers, at Oxford, to Langley, where he had founded and richly endowed

* In the wardrobe accounts under this year, we find a pleasing trait of Isabel's charity: it is an entry of money for food and raiment given by her "to little Tomeline, the Scotch orphan." And in a subsequent entry, we find that she sent him to London, to dwell with Agnes, the wife of the French organist, to whom she sent money for his keep and for his education.

† Vide Chronicle of London, and Pakington.

a house for that order. Had this obnoxious ceremony been merely the expression of the king's affection toward the memory of Gaveston, it would have been most impolitic, and, in the present state of the country, argued great weakness of mind ;—but the marked pomp, and the time chosen, a time when the nobles could scarcely absent themselves from the royal court without laying themselves open to suspicion of treason, seem to prove that Edward was rather moved by his long-cherished feelings of revenge, than by gentler motives. Few of the nobles, we are informed, attended ; but the king little heeded their displeasure, for he had found a new favourite, to whose sway he now yielded himself with even greater abjectness than to that of Gaveston.

This new favourite, Hugh le Despenser, unlike the former, was of noble birth, and distinguished talents ; his grandfather and great-grandfather had both fought in the barons' wars against John and Henry ; and his father, the elder Despenser, was high in favour with Edward the First, who made him governor of Odiham Castle, and appointed him one of the commissioners for peace between England and France. The favour which the first Edward displayed toward the elder Despenser was continued by the second, who made him governor of the castles of Devizes and Marlborough ; but we find nothing more respecting either him or his son, until the rise of the latter in the king's favour.* From the best authorities, we have reason to believe that the elder Despenser, who was now verging on fourscore, was a

* Dugdale's Baronage.

worthy and honourable nobleman ; his son, however, even according to his apologist Moor, was a very different character ; with commanding talents, with great personal beauty, he was haughty, reckless of right, rapacious, and of inordinate ambition.

Still, the public distress continued ; the scanty harvest of the preceding year was followed by famine. Wheat, which had for many years previously ranged from 2*s.* to 9*s.* a quarter, had now advanced to two marks, (26*s.* 8*d.*) in London ; while in places more remote, and where the market was more precarious, it actually attained the incredible price of 30*s.* The distress that prevailed was appalling ; *four* pennyworth of coarse bread, in an age that gave only a penny a-day as the remuneration of the labourer, would not suffice for the daily subsistence of one person ; the common people, therefore, sought in the fields and in the ditches for whatever might be found to satisfy their hunger ; and Trokelowe, a contemporary, represents them as actually dying in the streets of famine. This famine, it is true, was a visitation of Providence ; but the people, disaffected toward the king, and justly mistrusting his measures, clamoured for redress, and charged their misery upon the De-spensers.

During the winter, pestilence, the constant follower of scarcity, succeeded ; discontent among the nobles and the people increased ; at length, a knight determined boldly to appeal to the king in the following singular manner :—At the Pentecost feasts, as the king sate in state at the upper end of the palace of Westminster, a woman, in the dress of a minstrel,

seated on a richly trapped steed, entered ; and making a circuit round the tables, ascended the steps to the table of the king, and laid a letter before him ; then reining back her steed, and saluting the guests, retired. The letter contained a remonstrance to the king for neglecting the elder nobility, and the knights that had been in his father's wars, for others whom he had " abundantly enriched." The insinuation was clear, and the king blamed the porters for admitting the bearer of such a letter ; but they replied that it was contrary to usage to prohibit the entrance of minstrels at solemn festivals. The woman was found and sent to prison ; when the knight who had employed her came boldly forward, and avowed himself the author of the letter ; and the king, with singular prudence or generosity, dismissed him with a present. The remonstrance was, however, unheeded ; the younger Despenser had now the power entirely in his own hands, and he kept the king secluded from public notice, and gave audience himself to whoever came, " both hearing and replying of his own will."

Meanwhile, the Scots made an irruption into England, to endeavour to capture Isabel, who appears to have been residing, and probably with an insufficient guard, at York. This project was, however, discovered ; Isabel, by timely warning, escaped ; and they fell back : but by some means Berwick was betrayed to them. The king advanced to recover it, depending upon the support of earl Thomas of Lancaster, and a large army of his followers. Here the king aroused the indignation of his powerful cousin

by his reproaches, and above all, his threat of making the younger Despenser governor of that fortress on its surrender, and Lancaster haughtily withdrew.

The king now charged his cousin with treason, and the anger which earl Thomas justly felt at this accusation induced him again to associate with his brother nobles, to demand the banishment of the Despensers; and in the autumn they collected their forces, and advanced towards London, their followers, according to Dugdale, wearing a livery of green, with the right sleeve yellow.* Their formidable bearing awed the king; the Despensers fled, and sentence of banishment was passed on them.

A singular circumstance, strongly characteristic of chivalrous feeling, took place soon after. The strong castle of Ledes, in Kent, was in the hands of lord Baddlesmere, one of the insurgent nobles, when Isabel, by direction of the king, and probably on her way to London, arrived there, and demanded admittance. Baddlesmere was absent; but his wife and sons disputed the custody of the castle, and refused the queen a lodging, even for a single night. On hearing this, the king instantly summoned the neighbouring "good people," and the Cinque Ports, to besiege the castle; and earls and barons, on learning the unchivalrous treatment which Isabel had received, flocked to Kingston with their retainers. The castle was taken, its inmates sent to the Tower, and Edward, profiting by the fortunate chance which

* Pakington informs us, that the barons had *ten* coloured bands on their sleeve, and from this, the parliament that decreed the outlawry of the Despensers, obtained the title of "le parlemen de la Bende."

had bestowed a degree of popularity on his cause, proceeded to apprehend some of the opposing barons, and in December summoned a parliament, "to which few came, because of the distance, the badness of the roads, and the short days," and at which the king and his council reversed the exile of the Despensers.

Meanwhile, the younger Despenser, still hovering on the shores of England, "fell to spoiling on the seas," and took, according to Pakington, "from two dromonds about Sandwich, goods to the amount of 40,000*l*." The king spent his Christmas at Chester, and here several of the confederated nobles who had, in the preceding years, seized the lands of the Despensers, "came to the king's peace," urged by false promises of the earl of Pembroke. Among these were the two Mortimers, the younger of whom was soon to act so important a part in the history of the times, but the king sent them both to the Tower. As spring advanced, the king and his army proceeded toward the north, where the barons had assembled in battle array; and soon after, the fatal battle of Boroughbridge was fought, in which earl Thomas of Lancaster, and eighteen knights and barons, were taken prisoners. Refusing to surrender to sir Andrew Harclay, who had been knighted by his own hands, earl Thomas entered a neighbouring chapel, and there kneeling down, exclaimed, "Good Lord, I surrender myself to thee, and put myself into thy mercy." But his royal lineage, even his near relationship to the king, was of no avail, not even to obtain him that respect, at this period always

conceded to prisoners of rank. His "cotte-armure," with the proud quarterings of England and France, was stripped off, and, clad in one of his vassal's liveries, he was carried to York, and from thence to Pontefract, where, after a hasty consultation, he was sentenced to death by the king, his own cousin, who, with the elder Despenser, and the earls of Pembroke and Kent, sat in judgment upon him. He was led away,—a Gascon threw an old hood over his head, and placed him on an old worthless horse, without bridle. "King of Heaven," cried the unfortunate earl, "the king of England hath forsaken me; do thou have mercy!" On a mount, just withoutside the town, with his head placed toward Scotland, in allusion to the charge of his having betrayed Berwick, earl Thomas knelt down, and was beheaded. How little did Edward foresee, that ere long earl Thomas of Lancaster's fate should be his own! The sorrow of the common people, when they learned the fate of their champion, exceeded all bounds: the mound on which he was beheaded was visited by multitudes in solemn pilgrimage, who viewed the martyr of freedom as a saint in heaven; a marvellous age believed that miracles were wrought at his tomb, and the people exulted in the thought that now two saints of the same name watched over them, St. Thomas-a-Becket and St. Thomas of Lancaster.

Eighteen knights and noblemen, besides earl Thomas, paid the forfeit of their lives; and, rejoicing in his cruel success, Edward now created the elder Despenser earl of Winchester, the younger earl of Gloucester, and bestowed upon Harclay the title of

earl of Carlisle ; but little more than a twelvemonth passed away ere Harclay paid the penalty of his treason to earl Thomas. The king had made an unsuccessful inroad into Scotland, and the Scots, in return, had entered the northern counties, and extended their ravages to Yorkshire, while a portion of the troops commanded by Harclay were withdrawn by him into the midland counties. For this he was brought to trial, and proof being given of his treasonable correspondence with Bruce, he was "led to the bar as an earl worthily apparelled, with his sword girt about him, horsed, booted, and spurred, and unto him sir Anthony Lucy, the judge, thus spake." The speech, after reciting his crimes, sentences him to degradation and death, and then the form of the degradation follows. "Then they hewed the spurs from his heels, then broke the sword over his head ; after this they unclothed him of his furred tabard, his hood, his coat-of-arms, and also his girdle ; and when this was done, sir Anthony said, 'Andrew, now art thou no knight, but knave ; and for thy treason the king wills that thou shalt be hanged and drawn, and thy head smitten off from thy body, afterwards to be set on London-bridge, and thy four quarters be sent into four good towns of England, that all others may beware of thee ;' and so it was done in all things on the last day of October." *

Meanwhile, the power and insolence of the Despencers increased ; the insurgent nobles, whose lives had not been forfeited, were still kept in close prison ; large confiscations of property continued ;

* Stowe.

and the people openly complained that there were now three kings, instead of one. All this time we can find no notice relative to Isabel, but subsequent events ere long proved, that although she was a silent, she was no unmoved observer. During this and the following year, we find precepts for the due collection of her queen's-gold, and in the phrase "sanz nul nuisement," we may trace the difficulties which Edward, or rather the Despensers, encountered in the collecting of every branch of the revenue.

About this time, "a certain picture" of earl Thomas of Lancaster was set up in St. Paul's, and the people flocked to it as to a holy shrine. With impotent anger the king addressed a letter to the bishop of London, in which he states, that since so many, "deceived by diabolical fraud," have visited this picture, "asserting it to have wrought miracles, to the shame of the whole church, and our and your disgrace, and the manifest danger of the souls of the people;" he therefore directs him to prohibit the people from coming thither. Thus early in our political history was religion made the plea for whatever the monarch might choose to prohibit or enjoin. Whether the bishop of London paid due attention to the royal precept we know not, but the following month brought tidings more alarming to the king than accounts of fancied miracles performed by the picture of earl Thomas. The younger Mortimer, who, from his power and superior talents, seems always to have been viewed with hatred by the Despensers, had escaped from his close confinement in the Tower; and in the very wording of the precept

commanding his recapture, "either alive or dead," we may perceive the fear which his escape had excited. The circumstances attending that escape were romantic, and forcibly exhibit the daring spirit of "the Mortimer." Taking advantage of a tempestuous night, he invited sir Stephen Segrave, the constable of the Tower, to a banquet; when, after having administered to him a sleeping draught, he broke through the wall into the adjoining apartment, and descending from the roof by a rope-ladder, dropped into the Thames, reached a boat, and pushing boldly out to sea in that frail barque, landed safely on the coast of France.*

Still disaffection increased among the people. In the autumn of this year another precept was issued by the king, to the corporation of Bristol, directing strict inquiry to be made respecting a report "that miracles were said to be performed by the bodies of two hanged traitors buried there." We cannot ascertain the result of this inquiry, but it proves the feverish excitement that prevailed, and how unpopular the monarch had become, not merely in London, but throughout the land.

The rapacity of the younger Despenser meanwhile increased with his impunity; manor was added to manor, gift to gift, and at length he advised the king to seize the queen's lands. No reason for this most insulting conduct is given by any English chronicler†; but we find, from their united testi-

* Vide Henry de Blandford.

† According to Père Daniel, who quotes the French chronicles, the Despensers took advantage of the prospect of a war with France, to persuade Edward that she ought not to have the disposal of her lands

mony, that the pitiful king, who had lavished untold treasures on his favourites, readily yielded to the suggestion, and, "being wroth with Isabel and his son, through counsel of the two Despensers, took from them their lands and their lordships." This last injury probably determined the queen to seek for that redress in France which long and bitter experience had told her she might ask in vain from her husband.

Ere the close of the year difficulties arose which seemed to proffer her a favourable opportunity for putting in execution her purpose. Ever since the accession of her now sole remaining brother, Charles le Bel, to the French crown, Edward, unwilling to leave England, had postponed doing homage for Aquitaine; hostilities between his subjects in Gascoigny and those of the French king had broken out, and Edward was now summoned to appear at Paris. This he was more than ever unwilling to do;—to leave his favourites behind, and in supreme command, might probably be the signal for a general insurrection, while to take them with him, would be to leave the kingdom in the hands of his foemen, and to insult the French king with their presence. In this dilemma, Isabel, according to some of the chroniclers, at the suggestion of Adam de Orleton, bishop of Hereford, (an astute and sagacious prelate who had fallen under the displeasure of the Despensers, for adhering to the cause of the barons), proffered her agency to mediate between her brother and husband.

and castles as heretofore; and this was the cause of his seizing them, and obliging her to be content with a pension. He adds, that Edward at the same time dismissed all the French that were in her service.

That Isabel, who, for so many years had enjoyed scarcely the honours, and certainly none of the influence, of a queen-consort, should have proffered her services for so important a mission is surprising; but that her offer should have been willingly clutched at, both by Edward and the Despensers, is yet more so. None of the chroniclers offer any reason for it, and modern historians have, therefore, discovered the cause in the "blandishments" of Isabel, which, it seems, Edward was unable to resist. It is strange that these "blandishments" should not have availed at an earlier period to prevent the Despensers attaining such over-mastering influence over the king, or to avert the seizure of her lands; but we have no reason to believe that at any period of her marriage the neglected Isabel possessed any influence over the mind of Edward. The reason for this singular and mysterious arrangement, which gave a most important mission into the hands of one who, up to this period, had been, except on one occasion, a mere cipher in state affairs, will probably be found in the bitter hatred of the younger Despenser towards Isabel, who, from her rank, and the influence she possessed over her eldest son, now approaching to years of discretion, was the sole remaining obstacle to his complete ascendancy, not only over the king, but over the heir to the crown. By intrusting Isabel with so difficult a mission—a mission, be it remembered, involving so many questions of national rights, and which he might naturally suppose would be viewed by her rather with French than with English feelings; he laid a snare which, on her return, he might easily

employ to bring a charge of treason against her; and when we call to mind that even by Edward's eulogist, de la Moor, he is acknowledged to have been "flagitious in conduct," and of a mind that scrupled at nothing, the appointment of Isabel to such a task will appear but as a deeply laid plot to ensure her ruin.

That Edward was guiltless, we have no reason to doubt; nor when he duly notified to the Pope her appointment, and expressed his belief that the negociation of Isabel with her brother would be successful, have we any reason to believe that other motives swayed him in sending her.

In March, 1325, Isabel proceeded to France; and by the last day of May, the treaty respecting Guienne was signed at Paris. Still Edward had to perform homage for his lands; but the obstacles to his leaving England remained, and it having been suggested that his son might perform that ceremony, he conferred on young Edward the titles of earl of Pontieu and duke of Aquitaine; and, apparently well pleased with this arrangement, sent him in September to France. The young prince was cordially received by his uncle; the homage was performed—but although the year was drawing to a close, Isabel and her son still delayed their return. The Despensers, who seem never to have contemplated the risk which might be incurred by sending the heir to the crown out of the country, and who heard from day to day intelligence of constant arrivals of the exiled English nobles in Paris, now sent an embassy directing the queen and her son to return; and, according to

Pakington, proffered large bribes to some of the peers of France to compel her. To the entreaties of the embassy, Isabel opposed a stern refusal; she complained of the wrongs which had been heaped upon her, expressed fears for her liberty, perhaps her life, and passionately exclaimed, that she would rather be clad "in the garments of grief and widowhood," than go back; and protesting she should never be content until she had seen retribution on that Despensers who had been the cause of all her wrongs. The king of France was applied to, to compel her return;—"she came freely," said he, "let her return freely if she will; but if she choose to remain here, she is my own sister, and I cannot expel her." *

The ambassadors returned from this ineffectual mission. Edward summoned a parliament at Westminster, and detailed the queen's reply. He protested that she could not have taken offence of herself, but must have been wrought upon by some traitor; he innocently remarked, that he marvelled why she hated Hugh le Despenser, who was greatly afflicted at it, but nevertheless his innocence was manifest.† What answer the parliament returned to the king's account of his domestic troubles, we know not; but the "good commons" took the opportunity of again calling his attention to the misrule of his favourites. In their petition‡ they state, that the Forest Charter is continually violated; that many knights and ladies, by false accusations, have been imprisoned, and their lands and castles seized,

* Monk of Malmsbury. † Ibid. ‡ Parl. Rolls, vol. 1, p. 279.

“ the which have not been indicted according to the law of the land ;” that the king’s escheators forcibly deprive men of their lands ; that petitions for redress are disregarded ; and that, finally, “ may it please your high lordship, that the London itizens may again enjoy their franchises, customs, and ancient usages, granted by your ancestors, and confirmed by yourself, unmolested by your ministers.” To all these requests a favourable answer was returned ; but subsequent events proved that fair words were all the redress obtained.

Soon after the dismissal of this parliament, Edward sent a letter to the king of France, in which he states that, “ learning that our companion the queen, dares not return, for the fear and peril of her life that she has of Hugh le Despenser,” he assures him that he would punish any man that bore her ill-will, but that he never perceived any hostility on the part of his favourite toward her ; moreover, “ from the loving letters, the said Despenser hath showed us, we cannot believe that she hath any cause to fear him ;” and he finally requests that the king will direct her instantly to return with his son. On the same day, he sent a letter to Isabel, which thus commences :—“ Lady, oftimes have we commanded you, as well before the homage as after, that for the great desire we have for you to be near us, and the great uneasiness of heart at your long absence, and believing that through it you might fall into mischief—do you come to us forthwith, ceasing all excuses.” He next alludes to her dread of Hugh le Despenser, nearly in the same words, and continues, “ and

truly, lady, we know in truth, and so do you, *that he has obtained for you from us, all the honour that he was able* ; nor hath he done you any ill or villainy (!) since you companied with us, neither by aid or procurement, unless that, sometimes since, by your own means, you may remember *we said to you, sufficiently privately, certain words of chastisement, without other harshness.*" He then directs her to return forthwith, "ceasing all feigned excuses. And as for your expenses, when you shall come as a wife ought to her lord, we will direct that you shall not be wanting, in whatever belongs to you, whereby we or you may in any way be dishonoured." This affectionate epistle concludes with reiterated commands to return, but more especially to send his son, who, he fears, may be tampered with by certain enemies and traitors.*

That an insulted and high-spirited woman should be unwilling to return, when summoned by such a letter, will not surprise the reader. That she had been treated harshly, Edward is forced to acknowledge ; and we may well suppose that unless his harsh conduct had been sufficiently notorious, he would not have alluded even to "*words of chastisement,*" in a letter which was intended as a public document.

In March, Edward sent another letter to the French

* *Fœdera*, p. 614. A letter to his son follows, in which he also vindicates Despenser. Dr. Lingard remarks, that Isabel's complaints of ill usage "were too gross to deceive any one." Whatever that historian may think, king Edward, it appears, thought differently, since in no less than six letters he earnestly endeavours to exculpate himself and his favourite from this charge. Had Isabel's assertions been disbelieved, what need had he to do so?

king, complaining of Isabel's delay, and earnestly vindicating Hugh le Despenser, and, at the same time, another to his son, commanding him to return, and prohibiting him from contracting any alliance, except with his sanction—an apparent proof that some negotiations for the marriage of young Edward with one of the daughters of the earl of Hainault had already commenced. In April he addressed the Pope, and, according to Froissart, (who, although incorrect in the circumstances of the queen's journey to France, may probably be correct in this,) the French king was threatened with excommunication unless he sent her back. Meanwhile, Paris continued to be the resort of the banished nobles, and from the various proclamations issued during the summer, the people seem to have openly expressed their hopes of succour from abroad. About this time, according to the monk of Malmesbury, "the king, by counsel of the two Despensers, outlawed and publicly banished, in the courts of London, his wife and his son, as traitors to the realm."* From henceforward, reconciliation was at an end, and the sword alone could decide, whether the land was yet to endure the domination of the king's favourites, or to welcome back his wife and son.

The situation of Isabel at this time was trying; Charles le Bel, who seems to have allowed his natural feelings to be overcome by dread of the papal censures, sent a message to his sister, commanding her to depart. "When the queen heard this," says Froissart, "she knew not what to say or

* P. 243. Malma. This fact is mentioned by several other chroniclers.

do, and she had no resource or adviser left, save her dear cousin, Robert d'Artois." He, being informed that the king was not averse to her seizure, if she did not depart, came in the middle of the night, to inform her of her peril, and that of her son, and Mortimer, and earl Edmund of Kent, the king's half-brother, who, it appears, had joined the cause of the nobles. Thunderstruck at her imminent danger, Isabel asked her cousin's advice; he recommended her to proceed to the earl of Hainault, and his brother, the valiant sir John. Isabel immediately prepared for her secret flight; and "having paid for everything," as Froissart naïvely remarks, quitted Paris, accompanied by her son, the earl of Kent, and all her suite. After some days she arrived in the province of Cambray, and entering l'Ostrevant, in Hainault, lodged at the house of a poor knight, named Eustace d'Ambreticourt, who received the desolate queen with much kindness,—a kindness gratefully remembered both by her and her son, who invited the good knight to England, where his son bore no mean name among England's chivalry, and became one of the first knights of the garter. The arrival of Isabel was soon made known to the earl of Hainault, who was then at Valenciennes; and when his brother sir John heard it, "being young, and panting for glory," he forthwith mounted his steed, and quickly arrived with few attendants at d'Ambreticourt's dwelling.

The conversation which took place between sir John of Hainault and Isabel cannot be better told than in Froissart's own words; for when we remem-

ber that this part of her history took place almost before the eyes of Philippa of Hainault, at whose express request the chronicle was written, there seems no reason to doubt its general veracity.

“ The queen was at that time very dejected, and made sore complaint of all her griefs, which distressed sir John so much, that he mixed his tears with hers, and said, ‘ Lady, see here your knight, who will not fail to die for you, though all else should desert you ; therefore will I do everything to conduct you and your son, and to restore you to your rank in England, by the grace of God, and aid of your friends ; and I, and all those whom I can urge, will peril our lives for your sake ; and we will have armed force in plenty, if it please God, without fearing danger from the king of France.’ The queen, who was sitting down, and sir John standing before her, rose, and would have cast herself at his feet, for thankfulness of his great favour, but the valiant sir John caught her in his arms, and said, ‘ God forbid that the queen of England should ever do so ! Madam, be of good cheer, for I will keep my promise to yourself and company, and you shall come and see my brother and his countess, and all their fine children, who will joy to see you, for I heard them say so.’ The queen answered, ‘ Sir, I find in you more kindness and comfort than in all the world beside, and I give you five hundred thousand thanks for what you have said and offered me. If you will keep what you have promised so courteously, I and my son shall be for ever bound to you, and we will

put the kingdom of England under your management, as it ought to be.'”*

The latter part of this answer we may well consider apocryphal, for Isabel well knew that the English would never submit to foreign interference, nor, with English barons in her party, can we imagine that she ever wished it. Froissart next tells us, how, escorted by sir John, she proceeded to Valenciennes, where she was kindly received by the earl and countess, and where she continued eight days. Meanwhile, the gallant sir John wrote “very loving letters unto certain knights, beseeching them, for the friendship that was between them, to accompany him to England.” Many agreed to go, but many refused, and even sir John was “much reproved by the earl and his council, because it seemed to them that this enterprise was of great hazard ; and also, because the English are always very jealous of strangers, which made them doubt whether sir John and his company would ever return.” But the gallant knight held firm to his purpose ; “he could die but once,” was his chivalrous answer, “and that time was in the will of God ; but that all true knights were bound to aid, to the utmost of their power, all ladies and damsels driven from their kingdoms, comfortless and forlorn.”

The full consent of the earl was at length obtained ; he bade farewell to his brother, the queen, and her son, with great affection ; and the little but chivalrous band set out, and arrived at Dordrecht, where they were met by the English lords.

* Froissart, book i. chapter viii.

Their voyage was delayed by tempests, and for two days they knew not where they were. At the end of this time the storm abated, and descrying the shore of England, they made for it with great joy. They, however, landed on the sands, and remained for three days, uncertain what course to take. On the fourth, having landed their horses, they marched onward, "putting themselves under the protection of God and St. George;" and they soon discovered they were on the coast of Suffolk, and in the midst of people friendly to their cause; "for," says the chronicle of London, "alle the countree aboute felle to them of their own free wille."

On news of this landing being conveyed to Edward, he issued a proclamation, offering a reward for the head of "the Mortimer," whom he seems, beyond all others, to have feared, and he summoned the people to arms. But few replied to the summons; while, each day, Isabel saw hundreds flock to her banner; and in the arrival of earl Henry, brother and successor of the earl of Lancaster, of four prelates, and of numerous knights and barons, she beheld renewed pledges of the success of her cause. In her proclamation, in which she associates herself with her son Edward, and Edmund earl of Kent, she declares, "forasmuch as the holy church, and the kingdom of England, are in many ways grievously injured and oppressed by the evil counsel and aid of Hugh le Despenser, who, for pride and inordinate desire of lordship and mastery over all others, had seized the royal power," and seeing that through these means "holy church is despoiled of her goods,

the crown injured in many ways, the nobles of the kingdom have been some delivered to shameful deaths, and the others imprisoned and banished ; that widows and orphans have had their rights perverted to their injury, and the people, by divers tallages and undue exactions, too often ruined, and undone by divers oppressions ;" therefore, they are come " to raise the estate of holy church, of the kingdom, and of the people of the land, from those grievous oppressions, and to guard and maintain to our power the honour and profit of the said church, of our said lord the king, and of all the realm."

This proclamation was actively dispersed, and Isabel and her forces meanwhile drew toward London ; where Edward, and the two Despensers, and Baldock the chancellor, still remained. Anxious to secure the co-operation of the first city of the realm, she sent an earnest letter to the mayor and commonalty, " requiring them to be helpful in the quarrel." But no answer was returned, in consequence, probably, of the letter having fallen into the hands of the king's party ; " but the quene and her son sent another letter, wythe hangynge seal, to the city," says the chronicle of London ; " which letter, in the dawning of the day, was found tacked upon the newe cross in Chepe, and manye copies of the same were tacked upon windows, doors, and othere open places in the citey, that alle men myght reade as they wenten on their waye :"—a proof that reading was not so scarce an accomplishment at this period as it has generally been considered.

The king " was at meate" when he heard these

tidings; and, alarmed at the strong feeling manifested by the citizens in favour of the queen, he fled with the younger Despenser toward the west, whither the elder Despenser and Baldock followed, leaving Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, already keeper of the Tower, governor of the city. With him a contest arose; the bishop, according to the before-mentioned chronicle, having "axed for the keyes and government of the city, by virtue of yē commissione;" this demand, according to Stow, was resisted, and the citizens rising, wrested the keys of the Tower from the constable, and "kept it and the city, for the use of Isabel and her son." Whether she entered London, or continued with the army in pursuit of the Despensers, we cannot ascertain; most probably, as she was at no greater distance from the city than Baldock, when she sent the letter, she came thither; and as five days elapsed between the bishop of Exeter's receiving the commission from Edward, and his being beheaded at the Standard in Chepe, it is more probable that he was arraigned and tried, and sentenced to summary execution, than that he fell a sacrifice to popular vengeance*, as is commonly supposed.

The progress of Isabel and the army towards the

* Whether this were the case or not, that his execution was well-pleasing to the citizens, we have sufficient proof. Pakington, although an ecclesiastic, remarks, that he deserved his fate, "for he was fumische and withoute pitie." He says that Stapleton was making a "faire toure" at his house in the Strand, and wanting more lime and stone, he sent to the White-Friars, and took what he wanted from them, and therefor the Londoners buried him and his two esquires in the rubbish beside the tower "as they had been dogges," a proof of the strong attachment of the citizens to the mendicant orders. Isabel afterwards directed the body to be taken up, and placed in a neighbouring church, from whence it was removed to Exeter.

west, was a continued triumph ; high and low flocked to her banner, and every town opened its gates ; while Edward, with the younger Despenser, to whom with a fatal and mysterious fascination he yet clung, sought to gain a secure retreat in an island on the Severn, but being driven by tempest on the coast of Wales, they took shelter in the abbey of Neath. At Bristol, the queen and her adherents were welcomed ; and the elder Despenser paid the penalty of his son's misdeeds, by receiving the doom of a traitor. The king and the younger Despenser were soon after seized, and while the monarch was conveyed in proper state to Kenilworth, his favourite, crowned with nettles, and exposed to every insult, was executed with all the horrible accompaniments of the sentence for treason. Almost every modern historian has charged Isabel with cruelty, on account of these sentences ; with them, however, she could have little to do ; the Despensers were tried in the usual manner, and even had she, subsequently to their condemnation, been able to interpose a more merciful sentence, the nation at large would have clamoured for their death.

The constituting young Edward guardian of the realm, next followed ; and in the words of the record another proof of the advancing power of the commons will be found. This document states, that it was done " by the consent of the whole commonalty of the realm there being ;" and when the bishop of Hereford was commissioned to fetch the great-seal from the king, he is also said to have done so by authority " of the prince and queen, and the said prelates

and peers, with the assent of the said commonalty then being at Hereford." It does not appear that a parliament had been called at this period, but it proves, as Mr. Hallam remarks, "the importance attached to the forms of the constitution," and also the recognised importance of the third branch of the legislature.

Early in the following year a parliament was summoned, which determined that Edward should resign the crown. They sent deputies to Kenilworth, and there, the king having at length assented to resign in favour of his son, came forth, clothed in black, from an inner apartment, and then Sir William Trussel, in the name of the assembled parliament said, "I, William Trussel, in the name of the whole realm of England, and as procurator of the parliament, give back to thee Edward, the homage I formerly paid, and now I absolve myself from thine allegiance, and take from thee all regal power and dignity, which hath been yielded to thee as king." The great officers of the household then broke their wands, as was customary at a royal funeral, and Edward of Caernarvon, no longer possessing a legal existence, was led away.

From this time, the unhappy monarch becomes an object of pity; but while we lament his fate, let us not lose the stern lesson his example affords. He scorned the prayers of his people, until, aroused to a sense of their power, they rejected and deposed him; he turned away at the will of a worthless favourite from the tears and entreaties of his young and affrighted wife, and she in her turn withdrew from him; he consigned his own cousin to insults and a

violent death, and the fate he awarded to earl Thomas of Lancaster, became his own.

The events that followed the deposition of Edward, have been minutely detailed by those historians who most unjustly have passed over the progress of that perverse misrule which eventually drove him from the throne; and viewing all his misfortunes as originating in the ambition and revengeful feelings of his queen, they complete the picture by delineating her as setting honour and principle alike at defiance, and as eventually joining with Mortimer in the murder of her husband. This charge has so generally and so unhesitatingly been made against Isabel, that the reader will be surprised to find, that so serious an accusation rests upon the assertion of only one writer, Thomas de la Moor*. In turning to the statements of two undoubted contemporaries, writers who seem to have kept their chronicles from year to year, Murimuth and the monk of Malmsbury, we find no allusion whatever to Isabel, and yet they, residing, the one in London and the other in the west of England, and keeping a private journal, could

* The chronicle of this writer, who states himself to have been "an esquire of the late king," is a narrative of what was told him by William Bishop, who was an attendant on the king's attendants, and who related the particular, "after the year of the great pestilence" (1349). Thus the narrative which all our historians have copied from is, after all, only second-hand evidence, and that given after an interval of twenty years. The virulence of this writer is excessive, and his whole chronicle little more than a series of abusive epithets. Adam de Orletan, who is, even more than Isabel, the object of the writer's hatred is "a priest of Baal," "another Caiaphas," while Isabel naturally becomes "Jezebel." One portion of de la Moor's narrative has lately been tested by contemporary documents, that relating to the apprehension of one of the supposed murderers of the king, Sir Thomas de Gournay, and the whole statement has been proved to be false. Mr. Hunter, therefore, remarks, that it is impossible to avoid suspecting that other parts of the chronicle may be as little worthy of belief.—*Vide the Essay in the Archæologia*, vol. xxvii.

scarcely have avoided hearing such a report, and could incur no risk by recording it. Froissart and Pakington, both holding situations in Edward the Third's court, are equally silent; although neither of them is friendly to Isabel; while Avesbury, who wrote about the end of this century, and is considered as a very accurate writer, while he accuses Mortimer, never alludes to Isabel, except to charge her with having lost Scotland, by consenting to the marriage of her daughter with the son of Bruce. Now, surely the testimony of only *one* writer, and he bitterly opposed to the popular cause, and whose whole narrative is a farrago of the most virulent abuse, ought not to be allowed to outweigh, even the negative testimony of *five*, not one of whom had any possible reason for concealing the truth.

The same writer that charges Isabel with being accessory to her husband's murder, charges her also with having taken Mortimer as her paramour, even from the time of her visit to France. The falsehood of this charge, although believed by several of our historians, is obvious. Would earl Edmund, of Kent, the king's half brother, have associated his name with that of a woman whose profligacy* must have been so notorious? Would earl Henry, of Lancaster, have joyfully joined the invading army, with all his retainers, to aid in raising the queen's paramour to almost supreme power in the state, or would the majority of the prelates have supported Isabel, had her conduct been thus openly flagitious*? Even

* It may, perhaps, be answered, that these prelates cared little about morality, but it should be remembered that *public* profligacy was always

after the death of the king, there is no direct evidence to prove this charge, which, nevertheless, has been made as unhesitatingly as the former. Earl Edmund of Kent now became associated in the guardianship of the kingdom with Mortimer, and as Dr. Barnes, in his life of Edward the Third, remarks, it is most unlikely he would have done so, had Mortimer been, even then, the paramour of Isabel. He also remarks, that Mortimer, during these years, continued to reside at his castles, in the society of his wife and children, and that he was so far from being the young and gallant knight which he has been so often represented, that he was certainly advanced at least to middle age, and had a numerous family of grandchildren. He therefore considers that the partiality of Isabel for Mortimer, arose solely from the ready aid he had afforded her in her distress, and from the commanding powers of mind which he always displayed.

That this partiality eventually excited the jealousy of the nobles, and particularly of the earl of Kent, is certain; and to it the downfall of "the Mortimer" may be clearly traced. The love of state and magnificence, which was so prominent a feature in this celebrated man's character, also contributed to

visitable by the censures of the church. It may be remarked here, that Adam de Orleton, the bishop of Hereford, in his apology, which is printed at the end of Knyghton, and which was his public vindication of his conduct, speaks most respectfully of Isabel, and fully exonerates her from the charge of capriciously refusing to visit her husband after his deposition, by declaring that she had just reason to fear his ill-usage, especially since the execution of the Despensers. Murimuth expressly asserts that, although she did not visit him, she sent him "delicate garments," and other presents. In no writer, save de la Moor, do we find Edward the Second represented as being of a mild disposition.

his ruin ; the estates which were lavished upon him, and which he seems to have sought eagerly after, to sustain his immense expenditure, shortly rendered him obnoxious to many of the people, who began to fear that in rapacity Mortimer might soon rival Despensers. But the act which beyond every other excited the rage both of nobles and people, was the treaty with Scotland, in which her independence was recognised, and arrangements made for the marriage of the heir to her crown, with the sister of Edward, Joan of the Tower. The anger which this treaty excited, may be perceived in the prominent place which it occupies in all the chronicles of the times, and the bitter vituperation both of Isabel and Mortimer, which always accompanies the statement. It is amusing to find that the articles of this treaty, which are dwelt upon with the greatest bitterness, are those which refer to the cession of a book called the " Ragman Roll," and a precious relic known as the " Black Cross of Scotland." Each of these, in the popular belief, ensured the conquest of Scotland, and thus the yielding up of these precious pledges amounted to an absolute vacation of all right to the Scottish territories. The politician of the present day would probably entertain a different view of this measure ; in the unsettled state of the English realm, and with a king in his minority, a border warfare, while it could be attended with little real advantage, would necessarily be accompanied by great expense. Besides, Edward and his mother had even then a nobler prize in view ; and, eyeing the fertile plains and wealthy cities of France as her son's legitimate

inheritance, Isabel would naturally labour to maintain peace at home, that all the force of the kingdom might be available when the time to contest that more valuable possession should come.

But the nation did not think so ; urged, probably, by the recollection of the dying injunctions of the First Edward, they clamoured for war with Scotland, and in after years we find that Edward, as one of his most popular measures, annulled the treaty. During this time, we find many entries on the records relating to Isabel. Estates in Cornwall and Ponthieu are assigned her ; various grants of money, in one instance as large a sum as five thousand marks, are made ; and we find that she went to Scotland, probably to accompany her daughter, soon after the treaty was signed.

The proceedings of the following year are involved in great obscurity. In the spring, earl Edmund of Kent was seized, on a charge of plotting to remove the young king, on the plea that the deposed father was still living ; and, after a summary trial, he was executed at Winchester. With the whole of these proceedings many writers have charged Isabel and Mortimer ; and it has been stated that Mortimer caused the earl of Kent to be beheaded, unknown to the king, he having induced Isabel to detain the messenger that was sent to acquaint Edward with his condemnation. This story is very improbable, and it is most likely had its origin in Edward having subsequently expressed sorrow at the fate of his uncle. That Mortimer hated the earl of Kent is probable ; and that, in a contest to ruin each other,

the younger fell a victim, is as much as authentic history warrants us to assert.

The period that intervened between the earl of Kent's death and the downfall of Mortimer, was one apparently of great excitement. In the *Fœdera* we find proclamations to the sheriffs, asserting that certain traitors, having purchased arms abroad, are about to return to England in hostile array, and therefore tournaments, which might afford a plausible opportunity for armed men to meet together, are strictly prohibited "throughout the whole kingdom." These proclamations were made in July, and in August we find a precept, stating that "certain rebels" were about to enter the kingdom, and directing that strict watch be kept, is addressed to the bishop of Durham. Thus, it is probable that an extensive and well-organised conspiracy against Mortimer, who at this time had the regal power in his hands, was formed. By what means, or through whose agency, Edward joined against his former favourite, no historian acquaints us; the state of pupilage in which he seems to have been kept by the ambitious Mortimer, must however have been most galling to a young and high-spirited monarch, and may of itself be considered sufficient to account for his conduct.

In the autumn a parliament was summoned at Nottingham, and thither the king, with a numerous escort of nobles, came. The story of the king's party gaining entrance to the castle through a passage in the rock, and surprising Mortimer in the queen's chamber, is untrue. Knyghton, whose state-

ment is mostly followed, and who, as a canon of Leicester, resided little more than twenty miles distant, says—"On the morrow of St. Luke, the king came to the castle into the chamber of the queen his mother, and found there, in another chamber near her, Roger de Mortimer and the bishop of London, whereupon he was seized."* Immediately upon this seizure, the king issued a proclamation to the sheriffs, stating—"Whereas, the affairs of our kingdom have been conducted to the damage and dishonour of us and our people, the earl of March, Oliver de Ingham, and Simon de Beresford, have been arrested; and we will that all people shall know, that from henceforth we will govern our people according to right and reason;" and promising, besides, that all things shall be done by the advice of parliament. Mortimer was conveyed to London, and sentenced to death for a long list of crimes—among which the setting himself above his fellow nobles, his receiving bribes from Scotland, and taking all power out of the young king's hands, are the principal, while being accessory to the late king's death is mentioned only incidentally; and on St. Andrew's day he was dragged on a hurdle from the Tower to the Elms, and there hanged. The hostility of his brother nobles probably awarded him this unknighly death; but his body was neither quartered nor beheaded, but after two days was removed to the church of the Grey-Friars, just beside. Perhaps Edward, although

* That Mortimer apprehended danger at this time is likely, for Pakington tells us there were *nine score* knights belonging to him in Nottingham castle.

not displeased at the death of so powerful a noble, interposed to protect his remains.

What became of Isabel during this interval we cannot ascertain. According to our popular historians, who in this instance have followed Knyghton * and de la Moor, she was, as his paramour, deprived of her dower, deposed from her state as queen, and committed to close confinement to the end of her life. The truth of these statements we have now to test.

Ere a year had passed, we find a precept, directing the body of Mortimer to be restored to his wife and son on their petition, that it might be conveyed to Wigmore castle; and, at the same time, the younger Mortimer is reinstated in all his father's possessions. In the March following, a document appears in the same collection, stating that whereas "Isabel, queen of England, our most beloved mother, having formerly, *freely and of her own will*, given back to us her castles, towns, &c., on condition of receiving £3000 per annum from our Exchequer;" it continues, that as this had afterwards been exchanged for a rent-charge upon lands, and the king having already assigned £2000, now assigns the remaining £1000, charged upon certain castles, towns, &c., a list of which follows. The charter concludes thus—
"And we, *willing to do our mother yet more favour*,

* It is not surprising that Knyghton should join in an ill report of Isabel, since he tells us that in January 1328, she collected a large body of men against the earl of Lancaster, and that they greatly injured "the parks, vineyards, moats, and fish-ponds" of Leicester Abbey, and took away whatever they could lay their hands upon; conduct quite sufficient to induce a monkish chronicler to speak ill of their directors. But it affords an additional proof of her innocence of the murder of her husband, that he never charges Isabel with that crime.

will and grant that our said mother shall have and hold, for all her life, our aforesaid castles, towns, &c., with the knightly service, presentations to churches and chapels, wardships, fines, and all other things pertaining; and, after her death, these to revert wholly to us and our heirs."* This charter, which recognises so fully Isabel's royal station, is dated only sixteen months subsequently to the execution of Mortimer; but a stronger proof that this much abused queen never lost the respect and affection of her son, still remains. In the course of this summer Edward's eldest daughter was born; and this child, the princess royal, received the name of Isabel. Surely had the conduct of Isabel of France been what it has generally been represented, Edward could never have outraged both his own feelings and public opinion, by giving to his first-born daughter so dishonourable a name.

The next notice we find of Isabel, is in Prynn's *Aurum Reginæ*, where, in the following year (1333) we find a precept, directing the collection of her arrears of queen's gold; and in 1343, there is a precept in the *Fœdera*, exempting her chattels from taxation, because "Isabel, our most beloved mother, is an exempt person." In 1344, we find a grant of lands in Gascoigny made to her; and, in 1346, she gives to the minoresses of St. Clare,† the advowsons of the churches of Kessingland and Framden, in Suffolk, together with that of Walton-upon-Trent, to pray for the soul of her husband.

The most important document, however, relative

* *Fœdera*, page 835, Record edition.

† *Archæologia*, vol. xv.

to Isabel, is one which seems to have escaped the notice of all our historians. This is the *Fœdera* in the articles of the truce, agreed upon between the earl of Doncaster and the earl of Eu, in 1348. In this it is determined "that our very dear and very redoubted ladies, my lady the queen Joan of France and Navarre, and my lady queen Isabel, the queen of England, as *friends and mediatrices between the parties*," (the two kings) "shall come, the one to Boulogne and the other to Calais, and meet at a certain neutral place," to mediate a peace. A proclamation, on the part of Philip, accepting the two queens as mediatrices, follows; but we are not informed of the result. From this period we find no notice of Isabel for nine years; and then a letter of safe-conduct for William of Leith appears in the *Fœdera*, "who is now at Castle Rising, on certain business belonging to our dearest mother, Isabel, queen of England." This person was probably a messenger from her daughter the queen of Scotland, who this year came over to England, where she died: she was buried with great pomp in the church of the Grey-Friars, whither, in little more than a year, the mother followed.

In November, 1358, Isabel of France died; and the following precepts show the filial respect which the hero of Cressy paid to the remains of his mother. The first, dated November 20th, directs that the sheriffs shall cause "the king's highways, called Bishopsgate-street and Aldgate-street, to be cleansed from all dirt, and made decent, against the coming of the body of Isabel, late queen of England;" and

another precept, of December 1st, directs the barons of the exchequer to allow nine pounds to the sheriffs for that purpose.* In the Issue Roll of 33rd of Edward, compensation is directed to be made to John Galeys of £10, "for the loss which the said John sustained for the accommodation of his houses at Mile-end, during the time the body of Isabel, late queen of England, the king's mother, remained there *with the king and his household*." From the Monasticon we learn that the body was conveyed, with royal pomp, to the church of the Grey-Friars, to which, during her life, Isabel had been a munificent benefactress, and was buried in the choir; while Edward caused the great west window to be glazed "for the soul of his dearest mother." Surely such honours during life, and so splendid and public a funeral, would not have been conferred on a woman who had narrowly escaped the doom of a murderess, or even upon one whose criminal conduct demanded her expulsion from society.

For the strict seclusion in which so many of the latter years of Isabel's life were past, some of the French writers have accounted, by asserting that she took the habit of the sisters of St. Clare, although she did not retire to a convent. This seems very probable; and it also will account for her exchanging her lands for a rent charge, since by the strict rules of the Franciscan order, neither individually or corporately, could its members hold land. A farther corroboration of this, will be found in the very curious inventory of Isabel's plate and furni-

* Federa, page 411.

ture, published in the "Ancient Kalendars and Inventories." In the inventory,* while the catalogue of royal plate exceeds in extent and magnificence those which have been formerly referred to, under the head of "jewellery," we find only "one red velvet girdle, with silver-gilt ornaments," a proof that Isabel no longer wore jewels; and, while in the list of furniture, hangings of "tawney silk, furred with minever," satin curtains, velvet cushions, and "carpets wrought with gold and silver stars," meet us; and the hall displays hangings, "powdered with dolphins," and a canopy of crimson satin, no mention is made of her apparel. But, on turning to the inventory of her chapel furniture,† when we find, among the vestments, "one robe of red velvet, powdered with golden trefoils and goldsmith's work, of blue enamel, with gold lilies;" and another "with buttons of gold, with the arms of France and England wrought thereon," we readily perceive that the splendid wardrobe of the once beautiful and haughty

* There are beakers, ewers, and basins, cups with covers, and huge vases, all of silver-gilt—"four dishes, silver-gilt and enamelled, weighing 33lb;" a cup of beryl, a jar of red jasper, and a cup of green; 47 salt cellars, basins of all sizes, and 115 silver plates, weighing 158lb. Among the entries are "four spoons, silver-gilt, set with jewels, and six silver-gilt forks." Vide "Ancient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury," vol. iii., pp. 233-248.

† The chapel furniture is also very splendid: cloth of gold, with the arms of England and France, decks the altar; the censer is of silver-gilt, and weighs eleven pounds; and a crucifix of crystal, set with gems, surmounts the tabernacle, which is of silver-gilt, and enamelled and adorned with precious stones, weighs forty pounds. The reader is scarcely aware that there were indeed few articles belonging to a lady's wardrobe but could be adapted to the service of the church. In the curious will of the wife of the Conqueror, she leaves to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen, her foundation, "my tunic, worked at Winchester by Alderet's wife, and the mantle, embroidered with gold, to make a cape." She bequeaths also her golden girdle, which is ornamented with emblems "to suspend a lamp before the high altar."

Isabel of France, was consecrated to the service of the church, and that the coarse grey frock of the sisters of St. Clare had superseded her gorgeous apparel. This, then, will account for her close seclusion; and it may, perhaps, account in part for the bitterness with which some of the monkish chroniclers regard her, even although they do not charge her with the murder of her husband; for the hostility which the secular clergy felt toward the mendicant orders, and especially the Franciscan, was never greater than during the reign of Edward the Third. The children of Isabel of France were four:—Edward the Third; John of Eltham, duke of Cornwall, who died in 1334; Elinor, married in 1332 to the earl of Gueldres; and Joan of the Tower, who became the queen of Scotland, and died the year before her mother.

Almost five hundred years have passed away since Isabel of France went to her final account, and of little consequence is it to her, what our verdict may be. But the cause of historical truth demands, that in every case a judgment according to the evidence, should be given. Every historian, from those of the seventeenth century to the writer of yesterday, has told the same tale of Isabel of France. She intrigued with Mortimer, she murdered her husband, and although she escaped capital punishment, she lived and died in close imprisonment, an outcast from society:—by every writer her punishment is represented as the desert of her crimes. Now what is the testimony of authentic and incontrovertible documents? They are profoundly silent as to her crimes; but so far

from exhibiting her as having at any period of her life received punishment, they all bear testimony to her possessing all the rights and privileges of a queen, even to the day of her death. She occupied a royal castle, received her arrears of queen's-gold, presented to livings, made donations to convents, was treated with every respect by her son, who named his eldest daughter after her, was appointed mediatrix between her son and the king of France, an appointment which would surely not have been given save to an "honourable lady," but which was well suited to one who was not merely a queen dowager, but the sister of a religious order; and finally, on her death, she was brought to London with every mark of respect, was followed to the grave by her son and his whole court, and buried in the most honourable part of the church of her favourite order. If the story of her punishment is found to be altogether untrue, is not the story of her crimes equally so?

The portion of history which has engaged our attention in this chapter, is in many respects the most obscure of any during this century, and on many points we are compelled to suspend our judgment until farther light derived from contemporary documents be afforded. Surely then with so much to disprove the commonly-received opinion respecting Isabel of France before us, we may well express our disbelief, and in the wise and gentle spirit of our laws demand, that she should be deemed innocent, until *proved* to be guilty.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Accession of Edward the Third—Marriage with Philippa—Edward's Journey to France—He determines to claim the French Crown—First Tournament in London—Philippa's Patronage of Literature—She founds Queen's College, Oxford—Other Colleges founded—Old London—The Livery Companies—Trade in the 14th Century—Domestic Architecture—Furniture—Condition of the Middle and Lower Classes—State of the Peasantry—Concluding Remarks.

THE reign of Edward the Third has by common assent been considered as one of the most glorious and prosperous in our annals; nor has the general opinion been contradicted by the additional light which more extended historical inquiries have thrown upon this period. That during these fifty years English prowess won unrivalled victories both on sea and land; that English commerce extended with unexampled rapidity; that the English tongue, consecrated by its earliest poets, at length asserted its national sovereignty; and that English freedom advanced with steady and triumphant footsteps; are each sufficient to mark the reign of Edward the Third, as an era of no common importance.

It was perhaps advantageous to the warlike character of Edward, that at the most susceptible period of life, he should have been witness to the contest be-

tween his father and the people : he had thus an opportunity of seeing how firmly he might rely on the bold hearts and strong arms of that yeomanry, who in after years divided the laurels with his chivalry at Cressy and Poitiers ; and he witnessed the irresistible force of that public opinion which, wiser than his father, he never set at nought. The influence of Mortimer, under whom for the three first years of his reign he was placed, encouraged, even if it did not originate, that taste for the splendid and picturesque observances of chivalry for which he was so distinguished ; and in the knightly prowess, the splendid hospitalities, the right royal magnificence of "*le gentil Mortimer*"—in the festivals of Wigmore castle, and the round table at Bedford, he first beheld a shadowing forth of those gorgeous pageants which in after years rendered the court at Windsor the very transcript of Arthur's fabled court at Caerleon.

On the first of February 1326, young Edward was crowned at Westminster, and in his first acts,—the restoring the charter to London, and constituting her chief magistrate chief justice within the liberties ; the reversing the sentences of all those who had taken share in the rising under earl Thomas of Lancaster ; and above all his joining with his first parliament in requesting the pope that letters of canonization of that idol of the people should be granted, all gave good promise of a popular reign.* Meanwhile he

* According to Barnes the coronation medal had for a device on one side, the prince crowned, laying his sceptre on a heap of hearts, and the motto was "*Populo dat jura volente*," another and important proof of the popular character of the contest which placed young Edward on the throne.

continued under the guardianship of his mother, his uncle earl Edmund of Kent, and Mortimer; and when we remember the haughty and overbearing character of each of these nobles, it is difficult to believe that Isabel could have had much influence in affairs of state.

According to some writers, the marriage of young Edward with one of the daughters of the earl of Hainault, formed part of a treaty which Isabel entered into when she fled to Valenciennes to ask his aid; this however is unsupported by direct testimony, although it is very probable; and the statement of Froissart is, "and as the earl had four fair daughters, Margaret, Philippa, Jane, and Isabel, young Edward set most his love on Philippa, and also the young lady was, in all honour more conversant with him, than any of her sisters." The partiality expressed by Edward therefore was most probably the cause of Philippa being selected; and in the second year of his reign, the bishop of Coventry, with two knights, and two doctors of law, proceeded to Valenciennes to demand the young Philippa in marriage. As her mother Jane de Valois, daughter of Charles de Valois, brother to Philip le Bel, was first cousin to queen Isabel, a dispensation was necessary; an embassy was therefore sent to Avignon to procure it, and all preliminaries having been arranged, Philippa, then about fourteen years of age, was married by proxy, and immediately after accompanied by the embassy and by her uncle the chivalrous Sir John of Hainault, and a numerous suite, embarked for England, and arrived at Dover toward the end of December. On approach-

ing London, the mayor, and aldermen, and city companies, went out in great pomp to welcome the affianced bride of the monarch who had restored and enlarged their ancient privileges, and it was with great feasting and rejoicing, according to Knyghton, that she was conducted to York, where at this time the court was staying, and where, on the 24th of January 1328, she was married in the cathedral by the archbishop. According to Barnes and Sandford, her coronation followed on the first Sunday in the ensuing Lent: this however, is an error, as the precept for her coronation in the *Fœdera*, dates in February 1330.

During the spring and summer of this year she seems to have continued at York, where negotiations were carried on for the marriage of Edward's sister, Joan de la Tour, so named from the place of her birth, with the heir of the Scottish crown. It was during this year that Mortimer held a "round table" at Bedford, probably in honour of the young king's marriage, and in the summer, king Philip the Sixth, who had succeeded Charles in 1327, summoned Edward to do homage for Aquitaine. In the deliberations consequent upon this summons, Edward is said to have first advanced his claim to the crown of France in right of his mother, but he was dissuaded by his council from pressing the claim until a more favourable opportunity, and it was agreed that waiving for the present his supposed right, he should go over to France and do homage.

The month of August and the city of Amiens were appointed for the ceremony, and Edward attended by his two uncles, by the bishops of London,

Lincoln, and Winchester, with a numerous company of knights and nobles, and a thousand horsemen, arrived at the city. Now Philip, aware probably that Edward might afterwards contest his crown, had summoned a goodly array of nobles and royal princes to witness the homage. The feastings were abundant, and lasted fifteen days, and at the end of that time, Philip placed himself on his throne in the cathedral of Amiens, with crown on his head, sceptre in his hand, and clothed in a long robe of violet velvet "powdered" with golden fleur-de-lis. Edward then advanced in a long robe of crimson velvet "powdered with gold leopards," with crown on his head, gold spurs on his heels, and a royal sword by his side. He slightly bowed, and then recited the accustomed oath of fealty; but Philip, surprised at the haughty bearing of the young Plantagenet, bade his chamberlain tell him "that the manner of his predecessors was to lay aside the crown, and to unfasten both sword and spurs, and to do the homage kneeling, with his hands placed between the king's hands or his chamberlain's." The spirit of the young monarch was aroused at this demand; he answered, it was unfitting that one king should kneel to another, and to the precedents which Philip caused to be read to him he replied, that he must consult the records of his own kingdom. Philip, unwilling probably to provoke so powerful a neighbour until he found himself more settled in his throne, answered blandly, and assured his "dear cousin" that what he had done would suffice for the present.* But the opposition which

* Froissart and Knyghton.

had been made, rankled in the French king's mind; he formed a plan to prevent young Edward's return: this was happily discovered by the bishop of Lincoln, an astute politician, and Edward and his suite suddenly returned to England. He proceeded to Windsor, related all that had passed to Philippa, who heard him "right joyfully," and from henceforth the hope of the conquest of France became the leading project of his mind.

These events probably caused the postponement of Philippa's coronation; and the search among the records, and the many discussions with the bishops of Chartres and Beauvais, which occupied the ensuing spring, were probably the reasons of its farther postponement. At length, in May, Edward acknowledged under the great seal, unable any longer to defer it, Philip's right to receive his homage, "kneeling with his hands within the said king's hands," having first entered his protest before a notary in London, that he did so to avoid forfeiture of his lands, and therefore, that it should be of no prejudice to his future claims—a protest which could only be of value if publicly made.

According to some chroniclers, the French embassy delayed their return until the autumn, and Edward, anxious to prove his proficiency in arms, caused proclamation to be made for a tournament, at which thirteen knights of London would be ready to tilt against all comers, for three days. The time appointed was the 25th of September, and the place chosen was that part of Cheapside, extending between Sopers-lane, the modern Bow-lane, and the eastern

boundary wall of St. Paul's. The "stony street was well sanded, to prevent the horses from sliding," says Stow, and a scaffold like a tower was erected across, from the top of Sopers-lane to the opposite side, and on this, Philippa and the fairest and noblest ladies of her court took their stations. Unfortunately there was no Froissart as yet to chronicle the right valiant deeds of the knights who jousting at this, the first tournament held in London, and thus it is only by an obscure tradition we are informed, that the young king himself, was one of the thirteen challengers, and that he bore himself right gallantly. An accident, which might have been attended with serious results, occurred near the conclusion of the three days' sports. The scaffold on which Philippa and her ladies were placed fell down, fortunately without doing any injury, but so incensed was the young king at the builders, that he ordered them to be instantly executed, and it was only the earnest entreaties of the gentle Philippa, who actually threw herself on her knees before him, that prevailed with him to grant them pardon.

With the commencement of the following year, preparations for Philippa's coronation were made, and a precept in the *Fœdera*, dated February 28th, directs its observance on the first Sunday after the feast of Easter, in Westminster abbey*. We can find no records of this coronation in any of the chronicles,

* The only other document relating to this coronation which can be found, is the claim of Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, as chief chamberlain, to the furniture of the queen's chamber, "that is, her bed, her shoes, and *three* silver basons, the one used to wash her head and the other *two* her hands." The claim is allowed, but the bed is exchanged for 100 marks.

and it is probably owing to this, that most writers have considered that Philippa was crowned in the first year of her marriage. But ere the rejoicings were well over, the hostility which had for some time subsisted between the earl of Kent and Mortimer, who had been created earl of March, broke out with renewed violence, and in its eventual results caused the ruin of both.

In March, the earl of Kent was charged with plotting to set young Edward aside, on the plea that his father was still living ; this opinion was held by many in Wales, and it seems to have been believed by the earl. What steps he took to ascertain the truth, or how far he advanced in the plot charged upon him, no chronicler clearly informs us. Nor, although many represent Mortimer as chief agent in Edmund of Kent's accusation and execution, do any show us how he was able to obtain sentence of death to be passed against the king's own uncle, unless the lords of the council believed the charges. The same obscurity rests over the circumstances of his execution ;—that Mortimer should have presumed of himself to order the immediate death of the king's uncle at Winchester, when the king, a high-spirited young man of eighteen, was only at a short distance, is too extravagant to be believed, although that Mortimer might persuade the king to give the order, is not unlikely. The execution of Edmund of Kent, however, far from increasing the power and influence of Mortimer, produced his downfall. The nobles clamoured loudly against a man by whose influence, as they believed, a prince of the royal blood had been

put to death, and in the proclamations alluded to in the preceding chapter, we perceive the agitated state of the kingdom, and the wise precautions of the young king.

Meanwhile, on the 15th of June, one of the most illustrious of the proud line of Plantagenet, Edward the Black prince, was born at Woodstock, and the joy of the young king at the birth of an heir to the crown is shown in the entry in the Issue roll, which grants to Catherine de Montacute, the right royal guerdon of "500 marks (5000*l.* present money) for the welcome news she brought to the king concerning the birth of his son." In the autumn, the parliament at Nottingham was held, and Mortimer impeached, and executed; and from that time Edward assumed his full sovereignty.

From this period to the year 1338, Edward, although he remained in amity with the French king, seems never to have lost sight of his determination to contest the possession of France, when a favourable opportunity should arrive; and during these years he vigorously bent his mind to the practice of every knightly exercise, and to the encouragement of the trade and commerce of the kingdom. During these years, in various entries relating to the purchase of war-steeds*, and in one curious entry of "one hundred marks paid to Isabella de Lancaster, a nun of Ambresbury, for a book of romance, purchased from her for the king's use, and which remains

* Among these, are "one called Pomers, of a grey colour, with a black head," price 120*l.* (1800*l.*); another called Labryt, dappled with grey spots, 70*l.* (1050*l.*); and a third called Bayard. Well might the knight set so high a value on his *destrier* if worth so enormous a price.

in the chamber of the lord the king," we perceive the chivalrous taste of the victor of Cressy. Would that a more minute account had been given of this splendid volume, for which a sum equal to 1000*l.* present money was paid.

Like Edward, Philippa was distinguished by her taste for romantic literature, and in her subsequent patronage of Froissart, we perceive her anxiety that the knightly deeds of her husband and eldest son, should be recorded by a fitting chronicler. But it was not the lighter species of literature only, which were patronised by Philippa :—the celebrated Dr. Walter Burley was her almoner, and he, most probably at her request, was appointed tutor to her eldest son. Robert Eggesfield, her confessor, was a learned churchman, and to his enlightened exertions, aided by the munificence of the queen, Oxford is indebted for another princely foundation, to which, upon Eggesfield's death in 1349, she became the especial patroness, and Queen's College still remains a noble monument of the wise beneficence of Philippa of Hainault.

The earlier part of the 14th century was indeed singularly distinguished by the liberal exertions of the great and noble in the cause of science and literature. Clare Hall, Cambridge, was founded, and liberally endowed, in 1309, by Elizabeth de Burgh, the lady of Clare, grand-daughter of Edward I. Pembroke Hall was also founded by a lady of noble birth, Marie de St. Pol, countess of Pembroke, the third wife of Aymer de Valence, who is said to have been killed in a tournament on his marriage day. She is

believed to have survived sixty years in widowhood, and to have founded this college, and Denny Abbey, about the year 1347. Trinity Hall, Cambridge, was also founded about the same time, by Bateman, bishop of Norwich, as well as Gonville and Caius, by their respective founders; and a few years later, Simon Islip, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, founded Catherine Hall, Oxford.

As the whole period of Edward the Third's reign was distinguished by the unexampled progress of English trade and commerce, as London was during this period the scene of the most splendid observances, of a reign unrivalled in splendour, and as the London merchants ere long became the companions and entertainers of princes, and even of the monarch himself, the interval extending from this period to the commencement of the war with France, cannot be better filled up than by a view of old London and her inhabitants, and an endeavour to estimate the general condition of the middle and lower classes, at an era in every respect as important as any in our annals.

Proceeding eastward along the Strand, the spectator, in the 14th century, would approach the outer barrier of the city, which marked the extent of its liberties, and which, from the adjoining magnificent house of the Templars*, was named Temple Bar. Passing this barrier, which from the name constantly used in old documents seems to have been merely a bar, he would enter Fleet-street, at this period not

* The order of the Templars was suppressed throughout Europe in 1307, and this establishment was then transferred to the knights Hospitallers, who granted it in Edward III.'s reign "to the students of the common law of England."

devoted to any particular trade, but abounding in shops, and surrounded by a populous neighbourhood: then, passing on the right hand the noble convent of the White-friars, he approached, not a broad street, but a river, tolerably broad,* and with a very rapid current, from whence was derived its name, the Fleet, and which at this period was crowded with small vessels laden chiefly with lime and charcoal, and bound to the wharfs which extended as far as Battle bridge. Crossing Fleet bridge, he would now enter Ludgate-street, and passing on the right hand the large convent of the Black-friars whose noble gardens extended down to the Thames, he crossed the draw-bridge that spanned the wide city ditch, and passing beneath king Lud's gate, entered the city. There the wide street of Ludgate opened to his view the west front of old London's chief ornament, old St. Paul's. This noble structure, the boast of the Londoner for many centuries, stood within an ample area bounded by a low stone wall with six gates, that extended from Paternoster-row to Old Change, and from Creed and Ave Mary-lane to the top of "West-chepe." Withinside this boundary, to the north-west, stood the bishop's palace, the houses for the canons, and their common refectory; to the north,

* In rolls of Parliament, vol. i. p. 278, Edward I., is a petition stating that whereas the water way here was formerly so deep and wide, that "ten or fifteen ships could come together to the bridge at Fleet, with divers goods and merchandizes. and certain of them pass under that bridge to Holborn bridge; now, by dirt and the washings of the tanners, and chiefly by raising the quay and diverting the current which has been done by those of the New Temple at their mill outside Castle Baynard, the ships are scarcely able to come in." This statement is ordered to be inquired into by Roger de Brabanzon constable of the Tower, and the lord mayor and sheriffs.

the detached bell-tower, with its four huge, finely-toned bells ; to the north-east, the chapel of Pardon Church-Haw, with its cemetery and charnel-house ; while to the east and south, " West-chepe," and a noble wide street, which although decreased in breadth and in importance, still retains its original name, Knight-rider-street, extended.

From the engravings of Hollar we may form some idea of the noble grandeur of old St. Paul's, although defaced by the tasteless and most incongruous Corinthian west front, which almost hides the noble arches and windows of the original front, and although at that period no splendid and lofty spire graced the tower ; but in the fourteenth century, the metropolitan cathedral, approached by wide flights of marble steps, with canopied doorways adorned with delicate imagery, and long ranges of windows of the earlier and middle Gothic, its stately tower 260 feet in height, and its graceful spire, tapering up 274 additional feet, and bearing on its summit the cross and orb, was a structure well worthy the first city of the land. Nor when the richly wrought doors were flung open, did the admiration of the spectator decrease ;—along a vista of 690 feet the eye glanced, from the noble clustered pillars of the nave supporting circular arches, to the rich screen adorned with foliated canopies and imagery, and surmounted by a border of lace-like delicacy. Passing beyond the screen, the choir displayed its graceful shafted pillars, and pointed arches, and richly carved desks for the choristers ranged on either side ; while numerous altars with their splendid furniture filled

the recesses. The high altar, displaying its gorgeous plate, was surmounted by the splendid inlaid tablet of silver and gems, that proud trophy of the London goldsmith Richard Pikerel. Above was the jewelled shrine of London's tutelar saint, bishop Erkenwald, while the beautiful roof of the Lady chapel and its large marigold window, filled with the richest stained glass, closed the view. Such was old St. Paul's—even at this period the last resting-place of many an illustrious warrior and churchman; and thither, to bind more closely the bonds of Christian brotherhood, came the city companies after any occasion of strife; and thither came, on the afternoon of lord-mayor's day, the civic procession, to proffer grateful thanks at the tomb of "good bishop William." And here the bodies of Elinor of Castile, and of Edward, rested on their road to Westminster; here the captive monarch of France offered his vows; and here Bolingbroke paused to kneel in prayer beside his father's tomb, in the midst of his triumphal procession, to receive a crown. Here, too, the corpse of Richard was exposed in "a playne litter of blacke;" here, surrounded by gleaming banners, and blazing tapers, the body of Henry, the victor of Azincourt rested on its way to Westminster; here, too, his infant son, "lifted reverently out of his litter by his uncle, and led unto the steppes going into yē quyre," knelt, clasping his little hands, before the high altar; and here, in riper years, with Margaret and the duke of York, he ratified that hollow peace which preluded the fatal strifes of the Roses. And here came Edward, anxious to win the favour of the

Londoners, with heartless smiles ; here, a third time, was the sixth Henry, now an unconscious corpse, brought ; and here,—the proud line of the Plantagenets passed away,—did the wary Tudor offer his three standards, and vow himself “ a man of peace,” now that an unlooked-for victory had ensured him the crown ; so closely connected with every changeful event of these changeful times was old St. Paul’s.

Quitting this noble structure, and passing along the church-yard, which was open for passengers during the day, the spectator would enter the “ West-Chepe,” a wide and almost triangular area, formed by the street now called Cheapside, and a field named in old records the Crownsild, which seems to have extended along the southern side, near the top, and also included part of what is now Paternoster-row. In the midst of this vacant space stood the Standard, an ancient stone cross ; and around it were stands, where the sellers of fish and vegetables, and the butchers from the neighbouring shambles, in blue frocks, and holding pole-axes, sold their wares ;* while the houses and shops that surrounded this market-place were inhabited by the goldsmiths, the pepperers, the mercers, and the linen-armourers. Although the shops were unglazed, and the expensive fittings up of modern times unknown, still West-Chepe, even in the thirteenth century, pre-

* In the time of Henry the Third, the inquest of the Ward of Chepe present, “ that from the ancient days of the kingdom the people were accustomed to hold a market in West Chepe, as of corn, bread, fish, vegetables, flesh, and many other kinds of merchandise, but that Henry Waleys, who was mayor, ejected almost all from the fair, to the injury of the king, the city, and the whole community.” In consequence of this representation, we find that the market was soon after restored.

sented a splendid appearance;—an appearance indeed so dazzling to the eyes of one of our earliest English poets, the author of the metrical romance of “Alysaundre,” that, unable adequately to describe the magnificence of the streets of Thebes, when his hero passed through them, he says that they were—

“ Als fayre of stonde,
As is Chepe in oure londe.”

Nor, in the splendour of the articles displayed, have we reason to think these early tradesmen fell far below their descendants. There were the costliest furs at this period, used alike to line or to “purfle” the cloak, to edge the hood, or to border the robe; there were garments of every gay colour and of neatest workmanship, with embroidered cuffs, and delicate silver or silver-gilt studs; and there were the multifarious stores of the mercer—silken girdles, neatly-embroidered purses, (the purse at this period was a large bag, always suspended from the girdle,) made of velvet or leather, embossed with devices of goldsmith’s work, and cords and tassels of silk and gold, the pride of the London silk-women. And there was gold-lace, and brodered gloves, and samyte, and sindon, and cyprus, and damask; for in all these articles of taste and luxury the mercers dealt.* Then

* It has been stated that, until the fifteenth century, the mercers did not deal in *silks*, but in woollen cloth and the smaller articles of haberdashery. On reference to the very curious “Subsidy Roll” for Colchester, in the first volume of the Parliament Rolls, we find John Edwards, a burgess of Colchester, stated to have “gloves, silk purses, girdles, wax, silk, sindon, and flannel, *inmerceriâ suâ*”; another burgess, William Gray, is stated to have the same articles, with other small things, “*aliis minutis rebus in merceriâ suâ*.” Now, if the mercers in a country town sold, even in the 25th of Edward the First, silk goods, surely the wealthier mercers of London must have done so, although we know that until the close of this century, the pepperers, the great

there were the foreign fruits and spiceries; and, casting all into the shade, the gorgeous display of the London goldsmiths—the tall cups and covers, the highly-chased salvers, the alms-dish, always in the form of a ship, and the spice-plate, sometimes like a richly wrought escallop-shell, and sometimes like a large leaf, or a widely-blown flower, and the jewellery, where every gem of the East, set in delicate fillagree, formed the brooch for the hood, the buckle for the mantle, the collar for the knight, or the frontlet for the lady.

Proceeding eastward along Westchepe, the graceful cross of queen Elinor, at the top of Wood-street, appeared; then the noble church of St. Mary-le-bow, and lower, on the opposite side, the chapel of St. Thomas of Acons; and farther on, Sewet's tower, a royal mansion, which, a few years after this period, Edward, probably from its vicinity to Lombard-street, made his exchange for bullion. On the site of the present Mansion-house, was the stock-market, a smaller and inferior market to that of Westchepe; and beyond, Cornhill, for centuries the mart for clothing and household furniture, from the convenience of its situation to the braziers of Lothbury, the great manufacturers of kitchen utensils, and the tailors and linen-armourers of Coleman-street and the adjacent parts, the exclusive makers of both linen and woollen clothing; and Lombard-street, then the residence of foreign merchants. The

Mediterranean merchants, imported them. The valuable character of the articles which the mercers retailed is farther proved by an entry in the Issue Roll, of 9th Edward the Second, where we find "tassels of gold, a chaplet and frontal of gold, an alb (a long vestment) worked with pearls and silk, and divers other merceries (*alii mercerii*) of that kind," are purchased of a London mercer.

line along Lombard-street and West-Chepe was the chief road through the city; and, on account of its width, its noble appearance, and the wealth of its inhabitants, it became the highway along which every procession, to the tournament, to the coronation, or to the royal funeral, passed. The second road through the city seems to have been the only way in Saxon times; it led along old Fish-street, where, until the fourteenth century, the chief fish-market was held, along Watling-street into Candlewyck-street, for so many centuries the residence of the wealthy drapers; who seem to have been bound by strong ties to a spot placed beneath the protection of their patroness St. Mary Bothaw, and close beside the highly-valued "London stone." Next was Eastcheap, the old Saxon market, celebrated from the time of Fitz-steven to the days of Lydgate, for the abundance and variety of the provisions sold there. This street communicated with New Fish-street, where at this period a very large market, both for fresh fish and salt, was held, and which joined the bridge, which, at this time, and for centuries after, was thickly crowded with houses. The more eastern parts of the city never seem to have been remarkable for trade. A large number of foreigners, basket-makers, and wire-drawers, were about this time, according to Stow, located in the manor of Blanche Appelton, near Leadenhall-street; and we also find that many artisans, employed in the inferior trades, dwelt round about. But if the eastern part of London could not vie in wealth and importance with Westchepe, in the number and splendour of

its conventual establishments it yielded to none. The noble priory of the Holy Trinity, said to be the wealthiest in England, stood just within Aldgate ; not far distant was the house of the nuns of St. Clare, and near that the convent of the " *Fratres Sancti Crucis*," which has given its name to Crutched-friars, and the abbey, founded soon after by king Edward, of St. Mary of Grace, near the Tower. In Bishops-gate-street was the priory of the nuns of St. Helen ; on the site of Spitalfields church was the noble hospital of St. Mary Spital, while just withinside the city wall, where old Bedlam stood, rose the equally noble foundation of Simon Fitz-Mary, the hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem.

Returning to the foot of the bridge, to the west, close by the water-side, the stock-fishmongers had their dwellings ; close beside, were the large warehouses, and stone-hall, and tall watch-tower, of the merchants of the Steel-yard ; next, the stately mansion of Coldharbour ; and then the noble stone-houses of the merchants of the Vintry, and their extensive quay, crowded with shipping ; farther on, Queenhithe, a large public wharf for salt and corn ; then a series of wharfs ; and at the west angle of the City wall, arose that ancient stronghold Castle Baynard. Beyond were the gardens of the Blackfriars convent, the mouth of the Fleet, the ancient palace of Bridewell, an occasional royal residence even from the Conquest, and the garden of the Whitefriars and the Temple. The western liberties of the city seem to have been very populous. The space between Fleet-street and Holborn was inhabited chiefly by

smiths and tanners; on each side of the river Fleet were the wharfs of the lime-burners and dealers in charcoal and sea-coal;* the butchers dwelt nearly on the site of Newgate-market; and turners of beads, and scribes, both in the neighbourhood of Chancery-lane, and of Paternoster-row. Like the north-eastern, the north-western quarter was crowded with religious establishments. There was the lately founded house of the Greyfriars, with its splendid church; the wealthy priory and hospital of St. Bartholomew; and, just beyond, the munificence of Sir Walter Manny, a few years after, founded the Carthusian priory, which now bears the name of the Charter-House. To the north, just within the city gate, was the Saxon foundation of St. Martin's, well named "le Grand," from its large and abundant privileges. Withoutside the gate was the mansion of the duke of Brittany, which has given its name to Little Britain, while from thence to the wide moor of Finsbury, the numerous streets and alleys were occupied by the lower orders of artificers—curriers, bowyers, and bowstring makers.

Such was London about the middle of the fourteenth century; and if it might scarcely be recognised by the inhabitants of the present day, far less would its suburbs. To the west and the north, wide tracts of forest land, covering that large space on which, in late years, a complete town has been built; to the east a succession of moors and green marshes;

* The first entry relating to this article is a petition of Richard de Hurst of London, who prays for payment of "10s. for the sea-coal (carboun de meer), ordered for the coronation feast of Edward the Second."—*Vide Parl. Rolls*, vol. i.

while nearer at hand, there was the stately palace of Westminster, rising from the water's edge, with the adjoining convent and abbey, standing almost alone. Then the hermitage of Charing, looking toward the noble mansion of the archbishop of York, now Whitehall; and the leper-house of St. Giles, literally "in the fields," and the simple church of St. Martin, with its equally appropriate title, and the meadow land, and gentle slopes, intersected by the rapid Fleet, which extended from St. Giles-in-the-Fields to the Elm-trees, on the western side of Smithfield. Due northward arose the stately mansion of the knights of St. John, a palace for size and splendour, and, beside it, the priory of the nuns of Clerkenwell. Beyond, the little village of Iseldon peeped from the surrounding woods; nearer, but more to the east, was the village of Hochstone, amid corn-fields and windmills; then the green moorlands of Finsburie, with the holy well of St. Agnes, and close adjoining, the priory of the nuns of Halliwell. From hence the eye ranged over wide tracts of meadow land to the grey tower of the distant church of Stibenhede (Stepney), while the massive keep of the Tower, and the spires of St. Katherine, closed the view.*

* In the foregoing description the writer has endeavoured to give a picture of London as it appeared in the middle of the fourteenth century; since although each successive generation brought alterations, there were comparatively few important additions for full two centuries. During the fifteenth, the erection of Guildhall, which until then was a mean and low building in Aldermanbury, the opening of Moorgate, and the planting of Moorfields, the building of many of the city companies' halls, and that beautiful row of houses which extended along the upper south side of Westchepe, called "Goldsmith's-row," were the chief improvements. In the following century, London fell far below her ancient splendour; and the fire of London, in the seventeenth, only completed what the sixteenth century had begun.

In directing our attention to the inhabitants of our ancient city, the chief guilds claim first notice; and here we shall follow the order of their early importance, rather than that of their later classification. The first among the city guilds (or livery companies, as they were about this time, in consequence of wearing a common livery, called) were the pepperers of Sopers-lane, the most wealthy and enterprising of the London merchants. Although not incorporated until the present reign, the guild was certainly in existence long before; and during the whole of the thirteenth century the fruits and spices for the royal banquet, and the silks and velvets for the royal apparel, were alike supplied by these princely merchants. In 1325, (as it appears from the curious records of this company, which shortly after, from the circumstance of their dealing in wholesale, were termed "grossers,") the guild was reconstituted "in the honour of God, and his sweet mother, and St. Antony, and all the saints, the better to maintain and preserve love and unity together." From the "pointcs" then agreed upon, we learn what were the general laws and customs of these ancient fraternities. Each member was to be of the same trade as that of the company to which he belonged: he was at all times to be aiding to his brethren, and to submit to the rules made from time to time for the general benefit of the guild. And the protection afforded him by his company was most important. If he were wronged by any member, he had the right of appeal; if he sustained injury from one not belonging to the craft, the whole fraternity

were bound to assist him in obtaining redress; if he became "poor by adventures on the seas," or otherwise, he was to receive aid out of the common fund; and if he continued so poor, that his family on his death were unable to pay his funeral expenses, then the cost was to be defrayed by the brethren of his guild, who, with a kindness scarcely to be found except in the records of the middle ages, were especially bound to attend; and the penalty of twelve pennies (15*s.*) was inflicted on those who, from carelessness or pride, refused to follow their poorer brethren to the tomb.

The wealth of this community is proved by their high charges:—on taking an apprentice, 20*s.* (15*l.*) was paid to the common-box; for the annual dinner, which all were obliged to attend, 3*s.* 6*d.* (above 2*l.* 10*s.*); and an apprentice wishing to become a member paid 2*l.* (30*l.*) Women were eligible to become members of this, as well as of the other companies: for, founded on the principle of the early Saxon benefit-guilds, they seem to have retained most of their customs; and these "sisters" wore the same livery, enjoyed the same protection, and were followed to the grave with the same honours. The gallant feeling of these city companies is farther displayed in another of these curious "poinctes," in which it is ordained, that each brother having a wife or a lady, whom he is desirous to bring to the annual feast, shall be allowed to do so, on paying for her admission; and the word used here to designate the unmarried lady, "*demoiselle*," proves, as clearly as their adoption of armorial bearings, that the pepperers belonged to the gentili-

tial class.* Their chief places of residence were Sopers-lane (the modern Bow-lane), and Westchepe; and even after the rise of the mercers, who, toward the close of this century, monopolised the silk trade, the grocers, as importers of spices and drysaltery, continued to number among their fraternity the most illustrious merchants of London. Superior in antiquity, and next in importance, the dealers in the manufactured staple of England, the drapers, may be placed. Although not incorporated in their present form until this century, still they must have existed as a guild even from Saxon times. The very site chosen by these cloth-merchants proves their antiquity, for it was in the most important quarter of Saxon London, Candlewyck-street, the ancient high road through the city, and close to that relic so highly prized by our Saxon forefathers, the London stone. Their early importance is proved by the fact, that the first "king of London," he whom the irritated citizens declared should alone rule over them, was Henry, the son of Alwyn, the draper. It is indeed

* Vide Heath's History of the Grocers' Company. It has been asserted that the earlier pepperers were most probably Italian merchants, but there seems to be no reason for this opinion. Of the names of the twenty-one refounders of this guild, in 1345, *not one* of the names can be even imagined to be of Italian origin; while those of Osekyn, Hana-peatede, and Halliwelle, are Saxon. From the names of the pepperers in the thirteenth century, however, as well as from the enterprising character of their trade, it seems most probable that they were chiefly Anglo-Normans; indeed, the two names which have been stated to be of Italian derivation, de Gisors and Bocherel, are certainly Norman. Gisors is the name of a town in Normandy; while in the Pipe Roll of Henry the First, a Galfrid Bocherel is represented as fining two gold marks that he may vacate the office of sheriff of London, a sure proof that he was either English or Norman. He is also represented in the same roll, as paying 100s. on account of a bill of exchange, which he had given to Adelul, the Fleming. From this time to the fourteenth century the name of Bocherel, or Bukerel, is of constant occurrence in the public records, or city annals.

probable, that this guild was chiefly composed of Saxons, and the names of Hardell, Nocket, Pountney, Cromer, Hynde, show how exclusively an English fraternity it seems to have been for many ages. Like the grocers, the drapers admitted female members; and a curious and characteristic trait of respect toward ladies, is seen in the rule, that the sisters of the fraternity should always, at their funerals, have the *best* pall.* The guild of the goldsmiths was incorporated by Edward, in 1327, but like both the preceding companies, it had been in existence long before, and most probably in Saxon times. The merits of the Saxon goldsmiths were acknowledged even before the Conquest; and in the will of the wife of the Conqueror she expressly refers both to the tunic worked by the Saxon embroideress, and the "cup made in England," as articles of especial value. Nor during the two following centuries did the English goldsmith forfeit his ancient fame. The gorgeous shrine of St. Etheldreda, which, until the Reformation, graced the cathedral of Ely, and the presents which the abbot of St. Alban's sent to the only Englishman who ever sate in St. Peter's chair, were the work of Saxon goldsmiths; and the royal plate of Edward the First, and the crown for his queen, Margaret, were made by the London workmen. At the beginning of this century they seem to have been very numerous and wealthy; while in their names, Flael, Frowyk, Farendone, Rokeslye, Twyforde, we find proofs of their Saxon origin. Their residences were in the upper part of Westchepe,

* Herbert's City Companies.

and the lanes and streets adjoining; and a precept, dated 1280, directs that the silver to be used for the coinage shall be such as is called "the silver of Guthuron's-lane;"* and soon after we find that the goldsmiths were directed to bring every vessel of silver to the hall in Foster-lane, to be marked with the "lybard's hede." The charter of Edward, in 1327, affords some curious particulars of this ancient craft. In it it is enacted, that all goldsmiths shall sit in their shops in the High-street of Chepe; and that no silver in plate, or vessel of gold or silver, shall be sold in London, except at the King's Exchange, or in the said street of Chepe, and publicly, that the trade might inform themselves whether the seller came lawfully by such vessel or not. That of late, not merely merchants and strangers brought counterfeit silver into the kingdom, but many goldsmiths, also, bought vessels of gold and silver vessels secretly, and immediately melting the metal down, made it into plate; that they made false work of gold and silver, as bracelets, carcanets, rings, &c. in which they set *glass of divers colours*, counterfeiting true stones, and did put more alloy in silver than they ought.† It therefore strictly enjoins, that no *shop* for plate or jewellery shall be kept, save in Chepe. How completely does this extract alone, disprove the opinion that this was a half-civilised age!

Friendly associations of the members seem to have

* Ruding.

† Herbert's City Companies, vol. ii. p. 129. It is probable that the robbery at the Exchequer, in 1309, is here referred to, and the precautions seem to have effected their purpose, for we have no after instance of such wholesale plunder.

been very frequent among the goldsmiths;—besides keeping other festival days, at that dedicated to their patron St. Dunstan, it was strictly ordered that the whole company, “bretherne and systerne,” should attend a solemn obit and dirge, in the church of St. John Zachary, by Aldersgate, to “praye for the gode estate of alle the brethern and systern of St. Dunstan being alive, and for ye sowllys of all ye brethern and systern paste unto God, and for alle Xysten sowlles, Amen!” A custom which also seems to have obtained in the other livery companies, and certainly aided in promoting that kindly feeling for which our forefathers were so distinguished.

In viewing those companies, which may be strictly termed mercantile, the merchant wine-tunners of Gascoigne claim the next place: those princely importers of the wines of France, whose liberal aid was so freely given to Edward, and whose names, during this century, rank so high among the city worthies. Of a later incorporation than the other companies, their rise was perhaps more rapid than any, and from the names of their chief merchants,—Adrian, de Valoys, Picard, Lyons, Merivale—it is probable that they were mostly of Norman, and, in some instances, of Poitevin extraction. Like many other of the city companies, they were divided into two classes, the importers, and the retailers; and while the latter were to be found in every part of London, selling their Gascoigny wines, according to Stow, at fourpence a gallon, and Rhenish at sixpence, the importers occupied the stately stone houses beside their wharfs at the Vintry, and exchanged the salted

fish and the cloth of England, for the produce of the vineyards of France.

Of more genuine English parentage, but equal in wealth and enterprise, were the fishmongers, the importers and wholesale dealers in both fresh and salt fish. Their first charter dates as early as the 17th of Edward I., but, like the preceding guilds, they boasted a far higher antiquity. The vicinity of Old Fish-street, and of New Fish-street, were their places of residence; and from the names of the earlier worthies of this company—Gubbe, Lovekyn, Merske, and similar Saxon names, we may trace their genuine Saxon origin.

The skimmers, who resided in the neighbourhood of St. Mary Bethlehem, and the “cutters and linen armourers,” subsequently known as the merchant tailors, who resided in the same neighbourhood, both received charters in the first year of Edward III., and appear, although not equal in wealth and importance to the preceding companies, to have been large and influential fraternities. To the latter company the making of every garment, silk, linen, or woollen, was assigned; for the labours of the needle were not at this early day appropriated to women, and it was only to “sewe silke broiderie,” a work which, from its delicacy and costliness, was deemed peculiarly suited to the taper fingers of the lady, that the instruction of the high-born maiden extended. But when we remember that, at this period, every skein of wool or flax, from the finest to the coarsest, was spun by women; and when we find from ancient documents that nearly half the weaving was executed

by female hands, we shall readily perceive that, although the women of the middle ages were exempted from every species of "plain needlework," idleness was not their portion.

To the mercers, reference has already been made, and although it is not improbable that even at this time a few among their number might be wholesale dealers, still, the majority were retailers. The variety and value of the articles in which they dealt have been already alluded to; but it was not until the 15th century that they took their station among the merchants, and from being the mere retailers of the more costly and delicate wares of the grocers, outstripped them in their career of enterprise, and became the first city company.

The foregoing slight sketch will enable the reader to judge, in some measure, of the extent of our early commerce. Still the view will be imperfect, unless we point out the importance of the fairs held throughout the country; since it was to them that the members of the London companies looked, no less than the country trader, as the sources of their chief gains. From the unprotected and the bad state of the roads during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, travelling to the trader laden with heavy merchandise, or bearing a well-filled purse, was difficult and dangerous. The periods of the different fairs were therefore looked forward to by them as the times when, by travelling together and affording each other assistance, they could both go and return in security, and, for the fatigues of one journey, lay in a stock which might last for the whole year. The most important

of these fairs were, that of St. Botolph, at Boston; St. Giles, at Winchester; and St. Bartholomew, at London; and although each of these fairs, in its original institution, was chiefly for the sale and purchase of wool and woollen-cloths, it would be difficult to point to any article of general use, or of taste, and luxury, that did not find a place there.

To the ancient fair of St. Bartholomew, each city trader sent his wares, and the watchful care exercised by the wardens of each guild, over the articles placed for sale, is curious and characteristic. Thither came the wardens of the drapers, for whom the fair was especially appointed, with the draper's ell, or "standard," as it was also called, with which they had the right of measuring every piece of cloth set for sale;* and thither came the wardens of the "cutters and linen armourers," with their *silver* measure of thirty-six inches, with the arms of the company engraved thereon. And there came the wardens of the pepperers, to search for "untrue powder of cinnamon and ginger," or for bags of "naunt pepper:" and there, in solemn state, the wardens of the goldsmiths, "in theyre lyverye gouns and hoodys," with two of the livery, the renters, the clerk, the bedel, and the brokers, proceeded to make search after counterfeit

* From the testimony of ancient satire, this appears by no means to have been a work of supererogation. An ancient ballad accuses the drapers of understanding by the word "*avoirdupois*" wool in short weight; and Piers Ploughman represents Covetousness as confessing that he went among the drapers "to learn his grammar;" and this he states to have been to draw the lists of the cloth tight, that it might seem longer, and to fasten fine cloths together with a packing needle, and then put them in a press, stretched out to their utmost length, "until ten or twelve yards measured thirteen." The drapers' ell wand and the merchant tailors' silver yard were therefore not unneedful.

plate, or "dysceyful thynges, beadis, and other stuff." So very strict was the search made by this company on this occasion, that on St. Bartholomew's eve, the bedel was directed to walk along Westchepe, to see "whate plate is in every man's deske and gyrdyl," and the wardens also went into Lombard-street, to seize whatever gold or silver plate was below the standard.* At the fair at Westminster, and our Lady's fair at Southwark, the companies exercised in the same manner their right of search; and from some entries it would appear, that delegates were sent to the various country fairs, armed with as arbitrary a power. This power has appeared to many modern writers severe and injurious; severe it certainly might sometimes be, but it scarcely could have been injurious, even to the members, while to the community at large it was most beneficial. Dealing mostly in things of high price, at a period when their relative value was but little understood, and their real quality still less, how advantageous to the buyer, and certainly not injurious to the fair trader, was it, that every one, whether knight or "uplandishe manne," foreigner or native, should be assured, that by purchasing silks in the mercery, spices in the grocery, or plate in the "orfeverie" of Westchepe, no inferior or false article could be substituted; but that, unable as he might be to detect imposition, the honour of a large and wealthy corporation was pledged, that the mere slight article of spicery, or the plain gold ring, or silver brooch, should be as pure and as good as though a de Gisors had

* Herbert's Livery Companies, vol. ii.—GOLDSMITHS.

weighed the one, or a de Farendone the other. And to this vigilant care did England owe the extension of her commerce, and, more valuable by far, her high commercial character. The wealthy and powerful London guilds stood pledged for the honour of the merchant who bore their arms on his vessels, and the Picards and Philpots of this century, and the Whittingtons and Crosbys of the following, are proofs how little this system was injurious to its members.

It were greatly to be wished that we could obtain some glimpses of the every-day life of these fathers of our commerce. That they took no inferior place among the higher orders, is evident from their assuming armorial bearings, from knighthood being so frequently bestowed on them, and from their magnificent housekeeping. Although we can discover few vestiges of the houses which they inhabited, yet from the accounts we possess, they seem to have been noble mansions. The cellarage yet remaining beneath Gerard's Hall, the mansion of the de Gisors, proves it to have been a large and noble building; the stately house of the wealthy draper, Sir John Pounteney, Cold Harbour, became after his death the town residence of the earls of Hereford. It was at his mansion in the Vintry, that Sir Henry Picard during this reign entertained king Edward, John, king of France, and the kings of Scotland and Cyprus,—sure proof that he inhabited no mean dwelling; while the most beautiful remaining specimen of our domestic architecture of the fifteenth century, is the hall of a London merchant, Sir John Crosby.

That in their noble mansions these princely

citizens were served "right royally," we have no reason to doubt. In an inventory of the plate of John Malwayn, a citizen of London, in this reign, we find a complete service of plates, dishes, salvers, cups and covers, and pitchers, together with a spice dish of enormous weight*, and yet his name does not even appear among the leading men of the city. The notices of plate left by many of these wealthy citizens at their death to their guilds, proves too, that such articles of luxury were generally possessed; while as the importers of the richest silks, the most costly spices, the purchasers of the finest clothes, and the most delicate embroidery, the merchant, or the merchant's wife, would scarcely be destitute of those luxuries, which were supplied to others through his means†.

On looking over the inventories of household furniture during this century, the reader would at first view be surprised at their scantiness; for all that large class comprised in modern times under the name of

* *Vide* "Ancient Kalendars and Inventories," Vol. iii. p. 219. In the same volume is an inventory of the plate and jewels of Robert Gyen, a merchant of Bristol, and this quite throws Malwayn's into the shade, while his clasps and brooches would have been sufficient to stock a window in West Chepe. Among the articles, and doubtless it was a great curiosity, is "one goblet of an ostrich egg, bound with silver," and it is valued at the enormous price of 26s. 8d. (20l.)

† A strong proof of the station which the companies considered themselves entitled to hold, is afforded by the *colours* which they chose for their yearly liveries. These were scarlet and green, scarlet and black, or more common still, "crimson and plunket" (blue), or "crimson and violette in grayne," still, in every change, avoiding the greys, the "sad colours," and the russets of the lower classes, and keeping to the "right royal" crimson and scarlet colours, or the blue of the mantle of the garter, or the imperial purple. In the various sumptuary laws of this and the following reign, we find the aldermen and the wealthy merchants, expressly allowed to wear the costly silks, and furs, and golden girdles, which were prohibited to any below the rank of knight.

"cabinet goods," was wholly unknown. The tables were long boards, placed upon tressels; the seats were long wooden forms, the chairs, which were few, were huge and rude, and the beds consisted of a plain frame-work, with a half tester; for it was not until the new world sent her mahogany, that the trade of the cabinet-maker was recognised. But in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the efforts of the weaver, the tapestry-maker, and the embroiderer, supplied the deficiency, and hangings of cloth, silk, or tapestry, concealed the rude wall; delicate napery the tables; cushions, mostly of embroidered work, were placed upon the forms, and the chairs were completely enveloped in coverings of the richest materials.

Upon the beds, which, during the middle ages, formed the richest ornaments of the sitting-room, the most profuse decoration was lavished. The rude frame-work was hidden by the brodered "counter-pointe," and the half-tester formed a canopy from which the long and full curtains hung, which were made of the richest materials, and mostly adorned with embroidery. Of these many descriptions remain. Among the furniture restored by Edward the Third to the son of Mortimer, was a bed of white silk buckram, embroidered with silver frets and butterflies, (the family device,) and a bed belonging to Philippa is mentioned in the Issue roll, as made of green velvet, embroidered with gold, for which a sum equal to nearly £3000 is paid, besides an additional charge for embroidering, "sea sirens, bearing a shield with the arms of England and Hainault." In the

inventory of Isabel's furniture we find beds of silk and velvet, richly embroidered and trimmed with furs; and this article of furniture is always specified with the greatest minuteness in the wills of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The other piece of furniture, upon which most attention and cost was bestowed by our forefathers, was the "cup borde;"—not as now a closet, but a little board or range of boards, upon which the plate was displayed. Although it was formed of rude materials, each row or shelf was covered with small silken carpets or gilded leather, while from the front the covering fell to the ground. Upon these shelves all the more beautiful articles of plate were ranged, together with whatever else was splendid or curious; the smaller in front, while the tall standing cup, or the richly chased spice-plate*, was placed behind.

Except in small rooms, or to be placed beneath the footstool, or beside the bed, carpets were unknown; but rows of green rushes, slightly woven together at the head and laid in order, formed, even down to the commencement of the seventeenth century, the ground-covering alike of the private dwelling and the palace

* From various notices it appears that the spice-plate was one of the most costly articles on the "cup-borde;" it was generally of large size, often enamelled, and sometimes adorned with pearls or gems. It was used for the various kinds of comfits, which during this and the following century were in great request, and which were made of sugar and various kinds of spices. As supper was served from four to five o'clock, a slight refreshment was generally required before going to rest; and it was then, that wine and spices were brought; the wine in a beaker by one page, who also bore silver cups, while the spice-plate was presented by another. At this period, and, indeed, a century earlier, sugar appears to have been well known. In a curious account of travelling expenses in the thirteenth century (*Retrospective Review*, new series, vol. i. p. 299), we find several entries of "sugar-plate" being purchased. This was probably sugar crystallized in a flat form. *Piers Ploughman*

hall*. On festive occasions, various kinds of flowers were strewed on this green carpet, and the old romance represents the "damsels" at the approach of summer, as strewing their apartments "wyth red rose and the lily's floure." Indeed, the passion of our forefathers for flowers, was only one, among the many indications of their strong poetical taste. Flowers were interwoven with every event of human life. The bride, flower-crowned, proceeded to church along the flower-strewn way; the corpse was decked with flowers, and the followers bore branches of rosemary; the city guilds walked in procession, bearing large bunches of flowers, and the canons of St. Paul's with garlands of flowers on their heads, went forth to meet the bearers of the stag, the annual gift of Sir William Baud to the holy brotherhood. On Palm Sunday, the spring flowers were brought into the churches and blessed in solemn prayers; at Easter, flowers wreathed the huge Paschal taper and girdled every pillar; on May morning, boughs of that sweetest of our national trees, the hawthorn, were duly placed at the door of the young beauty, and if the bough was suffered to remain, the lover hailed the omen; on Whitsunday, garlands of roses were worn by knight

frequently alludes to sugar as though its use was common. The first notice of it during the middle ages which the writer has met with, is in the "*Gesta Dei per Francos*," where the author describes it as being the produce of a cane, and says it is called "*Zucra*," hence evidently its modern name.

The beauty of this simple carpet can scarcely be imagined: the writer, a year or two since, had an opportunity of observing its effect in Crosby-hall, and she no longer wondered that for more than a century after the general introduction of carpets, rushes still kept their ancient place. Their brilliant green, their refreshing smell, their softness and elasticity, render them as elegant a covering for the floor of a large room as can be desired.

and lady, as they joined the royal procession to church; and on St. John's eve, "every man's door was shaded with green boughs, long fennel, St. John's wort, and white lilies," while lamps were lighted in honour of him, who foretold the coming of the "light to lighten the Gentiles."

It is gratifying to find that while the lady sate in her tapestried chamber, and the wealthy merchant feasted in his noble hall, the middle and lower classes partook of that general prosperity which characterised the whole reign of Edward the Third. In the notices relating to the inferior city companies we find abundant proofs of their competence, and the stern satire of *Piers Ploughman*, and the domestic pictures of Chaucer, alike bear testimony to the respectability and comfort of the middle and lower orders. Nor does it appear that they inhabited the comfortless dwellings which many writers have imagined. *Piers Ploughman* speaks of the burgess of the country town as building his house "hygh tymbered"—evidently alluding to the tall pointed wood buildings which still meet our eye in many parts of the country; while in the illuminations of this period the common dwelling-house generally appears tolerably large, and two stories high. The furniture of these houses seems to have been comfortable, judging from the many allusions made by the two before-mentioned writers; but perhaps the strongest proof of the general comfort of the people at even a yet earlier period, will be found in the preamble to the subsidy rolls of the 29th of Edward First, and the 9th of Edward Second. These documents, after general directions for taxing "all

goods, either for sale or otherwise, lawfully, and according to their true value," proceed thus:—"and in this taxation of goods in cities and burghs, let there be excepted (*"forpris"*) a robe for the man, another for the wife, a bed for them both, a ring, a clasp of gold or silver, a silken girdle in daily use, and moreover a silver cup or the mazer* out of which they drink." Now what a picture of the competency and comfort of the middle classes do these exceptions present!—the ring, the gold or silver clasp, and the silver cup, each viewed as the necessary luxuries of the middle station, and therefore exempted, equally with the plate and the armour of the knight, from taxation.

Of the earlier taxation, the returns from the city of Colchester are extant†, and they afford most valuable information respecting the middle classes. Each inhabitant is specified with his name and trade, and a list follows of the taxable articles in his dwelling, with their "true value," which probably means their lowest value, subjoined. From this list we find that the tanner, the mercer, and the brewer, ranked among the higher order of tradesmen. One butcher also, from the value of his stock and furniture, seems to have been a wholesale dealer in meat; a division of trades which we might scarcely have expected to find at so early a period, and in a country town. The lower class of tradesmen appear to have been plasterers, tilers, carpenters, and tailors. Most of these have silver spoons, generally two, although, as their value is placed at a shilling each, they must have

* The mazer, as we learn from the inventory of Robert de Gyen, was a bowl of wood, bound, and sometimes ornamented, with silver.

† *Vide* Parl. Rolls, vol. i. p. 243.

been only about the size of a small tea-spoon. Brooches or clasps ("*firmacula*"), also of silver, are in every inventory, even in that of the small butcher, whose whole household stock is not worth a mark; thus, as each person was allowed to have one untaxed, it must have been customary even for the smallest tradesman to have two. Their prices vary, from two pence to two shillings, but the quantity of silver, not the workmanship, was probably the test of value. Beds, most of these tradesmen possess, in addition to the one allowed, and these vary in price from two shillings to six; from the statement it would also appear, that by this term, the hangings alone were meant. Now, from 1*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* 10*s.* to be given for bed furniture, proves the possession of a fair proportion of wealth. The "brass pot" figures on every hearthstone, and its size and value seems in exact proportion to the wealth of the owner. William de Proveale has one valued at 2*s.* 6*d.*, for he is a wealthy butcher, while John Colyn has one, valued at only 1*s.* 6*d.* Henry Packman, the tanner, has, in addition to his great brass pot, a "possinet" (a skillet), and a brass dish, valued at 1*s.* 4*d.*; besides a bason, wash-hand bason, andirons, a gridiron and stand, also of brass. He has, besides, *four* silver spoons, a "mazer pitcher," value 3*s.*, two table-cloths and napkins, value 3*s.* 4*d.*, two robes at one mark, and a cape at half a mark. The pride evinced by our forefathers in their costly apparel, is proved by the last entry;—a tanner, who in *rank*, although often wealthy, was always placed among the inferior class of tradesmen, and living in a country town, possessing two robes in

addition to the one in common wear, and each of these worth 5*l.* present money, and the cape, or short cloke, worth an equal sum. In few instances, except in the foregoing, is more than one additional robe to be found in the inventories; but its price, even for the lowest tradesman, is never less than 3*s.* (2*l.* 5*s.* present money). From the incontrovertible testimony of this curious roll, we perceive that the opinion that domestic comfort was almost unknown, and that luxuries were within the reach only of a favoured few, is wholly untenable. When even the poorest tradesman of a country town, possessed one costly robe and a table-cloth, worth from ten to fifteen shillings present money, the gains of trade must have been fair and certain; and when the silver cup, the gold ring, and the brooch, were viewed by legal authority as the appropriate indications of the rank of the burgess, how forcibly is the political importance of so wealthy and respectable a class set forth to us.*

Descending in the scale of society, we still find proofs of comfort and plenty. The frequently-quoted passage in *Piers Ploughman*†, forcibly shows

* There is but one instance in this roll of a person above the common order of tradespeople; this is "Domina Alianor Hovel," who, as "her chamber" only is mentioned, was probably a sojourner. Her chattels are two beds, valued at a mark, just double in value to those of the wealthy tanner, and one robe, value a mark. No entry is made of her plate or jewels, since, as being of noble birth, these were exempted. As no other article of clothing is ever mentioned in these lists, except the robe, it is probable that this was viewed as an article of luxury, and therefore taxed; for, surely, we cannot believe that men who possessed robes of the value of 5*l.* could have had an inferior wardrobe. In regard to other articles of household furniture, it is probable that their value, if taken separately, was too low to be specified. The rude "bordes and tretyls," the forms and wooden chairs, the maple cups and platters, and the coarse earthenware, were beneath the notice of the king's commissioners, and therefore passed by.

† *Piers Ploughman*, p. 151, Whitaker's edition.

that the diet of the peasantry was far superior to that of the same class in the present day. He states that when harvest time drew nigh—

“ Ne no beggar would eat bread, that in it beans were,
But of coket, and clemantyne or els fyne whete;
Ne no halfpenny ale, in no wyse dranke.
Labourers that have no lande to live on but theyr hands,
Deigned not to dine a day nighte old wortes,
Ne no penny ale hem pay, nor no piece of bacon,
But it be fresch fleshe, other fyah fried or bake,
And that *chaud* or *plus chaud*, for chilling of her mawe.”

It is true that during the two or three months preceding harvest, the peasantry, as he tells us in a preceding passage, were fain to eat vegetables and oat cakes; but this, as he also acquaints us, was merely the natural consequence of the idleness and reckless extravagance, which wasted in nine months the allowance for twelve. Chaucer, in describing a “pore widowe,” represents her as possessing a cow, a few pigs, and poultry; and he seems to consider her poverty as great, since her food consisted chiefly of brown bread, milk, and eggs. It is indeed melancholy to reflect, that the agricultural labourer of the middle ages was certainly far better lodged, clothed, and fed, than the same class are now. In the fourteenth century, according to Sir John Cullum, a harvestman had 4*d.* a day, which enabled him in a week to buy a coomb of wheat; “but,” he continues, “a man must now (1784) work ten or twelve days for it;” but, in the present day, even double that time. Meat, during the same century and the following, was about a farthing and a half the pound; thus, as Mr. Hallam observes, the labourer earning eighteen pence per week could buy a bushel of wheat

at 6s. a quarter, and twenty-four pounds of meat for his family. Multiply the eighteen-pence by fifteen, and we shall find the agricultural labourer possessing the handsome wages of 22s. 6d. per week, and for that sum obtaining far more than an equal sum would purchase in the present day. Besides, house rent was almost unknown; and the slight service which the tenant paid to his lord, was paid for a portion of land, which oftentimes was sufficient, without farther exertion, to provide for the whole family. Fuel, too, was to be had for the mere labour of cutting it down; the common lands attached to each village gave pasture to the horse or the cow; and although the yeoman was prohibited, by severe penalties, from chasing the "good red deer," or the buck and doe, no penalty prevented him from setting gins for wild fowl, or from snaring the partridge or pheasant. It is easy to re-echo the common opinion, that our forefathers were a wretched and degraded race; but the testimony alike of the law report and the popular ballad, of the jurors of the hundred court, of the satire of Piers Ploughman, and the graphic descriptions of Chaucer, assert the comfort and independence of the yeomanry of "old England."

In closing our view of the state of society during this century, there is one subject which more than any other must awaken the regret of a *female* writer. It is, that during these ages, miscalled dark and barbarous, every woman who sought to support herself by her industry, was secure, not merely of a livelihood, but of a comfortable and honourable independence. For the lady, whom adverse fortunes had

thrown from her high station, there was the delicate embroidery and the various silk works; which, without compromising her station in society, procured for her a lucrative subsistence*. For the widows and daughters of members of the city guilds, there were the trades which the husband and father had followed, and in the exercise of which they were protected by the especial care of the masters and wardens of their respective fraternities. For a yet lower class, weaving offered a respectable and comfortable employment; while for the very lowest, for the weak, for the aged, there were the easy labours of the distaff. Alas! that the present age should afford so melancholy a contrast. We may perhaps have lingered too long over this subject; but while battles, treaties, the strife of statesmen, and court intrigues, so often fill up the whole page of general history, it may be permitted, ere entering on the annals of so illustrious a reign as that of Edward the Third, to turn aside from the records of princes, to trace the progress of commerce and social improvement—to contemplate, not merely “the damsel clad in mine-*ver*,” but the household maiden; not merely the knight, but the bold yeoman, whose stedfast courage aided to gain each victory, and ere we trace the triumphal progress of English prowess in France, appreciate the independence, the importance, and the opulence of the English commons.

* In the pleasing romance of “*Emare*,” the heroine, although daughter of an emperor, and wife of a king, is represented as sewing “*sylke worke yn bowere*” for her maintenance; and many other heroines are described as following a similar occupation.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT.

CHAPTER XIX.

Commencement of the War with France—Sea-fight at Sluys—Arms of France quartered with those of England—Edward's gold nobles—The Round Table at Windsor—Cressy—Armour of the Period—Philippa at Neville's Cross—Surrender of Calais—Order of the Garter—The Great Plague of 1349—Fight between de la Marche and Visconti—Windsor Castle—Its Rebuilding—Poitiers—Tournaments at London—Froissart—Sir John Mandeville and English Prose Literature—Clock-making in London—Philippa's Last Days—Her Death.

IN the year 1338, Edward proceeded to put in execution his warlike intentions against France, and having entered into an alliance with the emperor of Germany, and that no less important popular leader Jacob Von Artavelde, the brewer of Ghent, sailed to Antwerp; whither multitudes, according to Froissart, came "to witness his great state and pomp." On the feast of St. Martin, Edward was constituted Vicar General of the Germanic empire by the emperor, at Arques; and, returning to Louvain, sent for Philippa and his sons*, and on their arrival, he kept his court there with great splendour, and caused "plenty of gold and silver coin to be struck at Antwerp." During her stay at Antwerp, Philippa's third son, Lionel of Antwerp, afterwards the duke of Clarence, was born; and here she seems to have

* In the Issue roll for this year is an entry of 1333 $\frac{1}{2}$, paid to the queen for robes for herself and her son. It was on the occasion of this voyage that De la Pole, the princely merchant, lent Edward 18.000 $\frac{1}{2}$.

continued for some time. Against the feast of St. John, 1339, Edward, relying on the promises of the German lords, made ready, and having after the true form of chivalry sent a defiance to the king of France, signed with his own hand, and which was followed by the signatures of his nobles, the war began. But the season was too far advanced for the arms of Edward to achieve any great conquest; and it was that gallant knight, Sir Walter Manny, who was the first to gain a victory on French ground.

In England he had vowed, "before the ladies," that he would be the first who should enter France, to take some castle or strong town, and the ladies right joyfully bade him good speed. On the defiance being proclaimed, he collected together about forty spears, and riding through Hainault, soon reached Mortaigne, the first frontier town, ere the sun arose. Here, by good chance, the wicket of the gate was open, so leaving a few of his company to guard the entrance, he rode into the high street, with his pennon displayed before him, and reached the castle. Here he was espied by the watch, who blew his horn and cried "Treason, treason." It would have been throwing away the lives of his followers for Sir Walter to have attacked the castle, he therefore withdrew; and his company having set fire to the barriers, he returned, well pleased that he had been the *first* to prick forth on the plains of France.

The proclamation of war seems to have been hailed by the French with equal joy, but their conduct was less knightly. As soon as hostilities commenced, the French unexpectedly landed one Sunday morn-

ing at Southampton; and the inhabitants being mostly at church, they pillaged the town, killed several persons, and seizing the king's huge dromond, appropriately named the St. Christopher, returned laden with spoil, to the coast of Normandy. Edward heard the news with great bitterness of spirit, and vowed that when his turn came, the French should pay dearly. He returned to England, and passed the winter in active preparations for the ensuing campaign.

On the 16th of April, 1340, Edward assumed, on his great seal, the arms of France, and caused copies of it to be sent to all the sheriffs, with orders to exhibit it, and to make proclamation respecting it, through their respective counties. He next summoned his companions in arms, and the fleet being made ready, king Edward, accompanied by many noble ladies, who were to attend Philippa at her approaching confinement, set sail the day before the eve of St. John's, from the Tower. The royal fleet directed its course toward Shuys, unknowing that one hundred and twenty large vessels, manned with forty thousand men, Genoese, Picards, and Normans, the very flower of the continental navy, were lying in wait for it; but when they had almost arrived at Slays, they beheld so many masts standing before it, that they seemed like a wood. Edward now asked the commander of his vessel who they could be; he answered he thought it was the Norman fleet, which the king of France kept at sea, and which had done him so much damage, burning his good town of Southampton, and taking his great ship the Chris-

topher. "Ha," replied the king, "I have long time wished to meet them, and now, please God and St. George, we will fight them, for in truth they have done me sore mischief." He now caused the ladies to be all placed on board one of his largest ships, and gave them for a guard three hundred men-at-arms and five hundred archers; he then drew up all his vessels, placing the strongest in front, and between every two filled with archers, one with men-at-arms. They next hoisted their sails and tacked about, to avoid having the sun in their faces, at which the enemy rejoiced, for they said they took good care to turn out of their way;—but when they saw the king's own banner hoisted, they rejoiced yet more, for they were expert and gallant men upon the seas, and therefore they longed to fight him. They now set forward the Christopher, with a gallant flourish of trumpets, and bade her attack the English fleet. Now when the king saw his own great ship set forward against him, he was right angry, and so were the archers and cross-bowmen; so they shot with all their might, and the men-at-arms fought right valiantly, and they fastened the ships together with large grapnels and iron hooks, that they might not get away. At length the English retook the Christopher, and then, with joyous shouts, they manned her with their own mariners, and sent her against the enemy. The battle now became general, and "it was very murderous and horrible," says Froissart; but as he naïvely remarks, "no wonder, for on the sea there is neither drawing back nor running away, but each man must abide his lot, and

depend on his own prowess." And well did the English bear themselves, and marvellous was their valour,—fighting one against four from early in the morning until noon, and encouraged in their warfare by the gallant example of the king, who showed himself a worthy knight, and by the prowess of those warriors, whose names meet us on almost every page of Froissart's picturesque chronicle — Pembroke, Cobham, Manny, Beauchamp, Felton ; and Chandos, who, although now a mere esquire, gave proof of those splendid military talents, which so soon rendered him one of the brightest ornaments of a brilliant reign. At length all the French ships were sunk or taken, and the English fleet triumphantly entered the harbour of Sluys, where they remained all night, " with great noises of trumpets and musical instruments." Early on the morrow Edward disembarked, and attended by a crowd of knights, he proceeded on foot to the church of our lady of Aremburg, where, having returned thanks, he dined, and forthwith mounting his horse, proceeded to Ghent, where the queen welcomed him right joyfully.

During the summer, Edward and Philippa remained at Ghent, and here her son, the celebrated John of Ghent, duke of Lancaster, was born. But although the English chivalry displayed their prowess in several actions, the arms of Edward made no important progress until the field of warfare was changed from the Flemish frontier, to Normandy and Poitou. Meanwhile, king Robert of Sicily most laudably exerted himself to bring about a peace

between the two kings, and Froissart seems rather to wonder at his want of success, seeing that "he was a great astrologer, and had enjoined king Philip never to engage in war against the English, when commanded by their king, because he would always be unfortunate." He proceeded to Avignon, to point out to pope Clement the evil that would arise from the war, but with as little success; neither Philip nor Edward held papal prohibitions in much respect, and the college of cardinals replied, that unless the two kings would listen to them, they could not prohibit the war.

The time soon arrived when the war in France was to be carried on with greater vigour and success. In 1341, John de Montfort, who laid claim to the duchy of Brittany, repaired to England, where Edward was now staying, and by doing him homage for this important fief, secured his aid in his attempts to recover it. De Montfort was soon after made prisoner, and conveyed to Paris, but Jane de Montfort, his wife, whose fortunes form one of the most delightful episodes in Froissart's delightful chronicles, sent sir Amory de Clisson to England to supplicate the aid of the English chivalry. Edward, as sagacious as valiant, seems to have immediately perceived the importance of transferring his efforts to Brittany, and he willingly granted the required aid. But sir Walter Manny seems to have been actuated by chivalrous feelings alone, and his whole conduct, from the time he quitted England for the relief of Hennebon, to the day when he returned in triumph,

reads rather like a chapter in some lofty and romantic poem, than a story of actual life.*

During his stay in England, the conduct of Edward seems to have been characterised by great wisdom. He continued his unremitting attention to native trade and commerce; he gave additional privileges to many of the sea-port towns; by the splendour of his court, and the magnificence of his tournaments, he fostered alike the commercial and the warlike spirit of the nation; while toward his parliaments, which the expenses of his wars obliged him to summon almost every year, he seems to have conducted himself, in most instances, in a conciliatory and respectful manner. The feelings of the Englishman were, indeed, likely to be irritated when he first saw the lilies of France occupying the first quarter, and surmounting the lions of England on the royal banner; but, although asserting his claim to the larger kingdom, on the plea of hereditary right, Edward had the prudence to adopt this quartering in the royal arms alone. Indeed, so careful was he to avoid arousing the jealous anger of his people, that he directed two great seals to be made, and while, for sealing foreign documents, the one which gave precedence to the kingdom of France was used, that which was intended for England, gave her lions the first place. In like manner, while "king of France and England" was his style when asserting his right, to the continental powers; "king of England and

* Vide Froissart, vol. i. chapters 72 to 82; a very excellent condensed account may also be found in Mills' History of Chivalry, vol. i. p. 240.

France" was the more grateful form when addressing his "natural people."*

In 1343 his first gold coinage was issued, and here the lion, (leopard rather,) maintained its ancient station. The largest was stamped with the lion, the second with the royal mantle, and the arms of England and France quarterly, while the smallest bore his crest. This coinage was soon called in, and then a beautiful new coinage was issued during the following year, in which the monarch appears on board his ship, with a shield on his arm, evidently asserting his sovereignty over the sea; while the cross-fleury and the lions formed the reverse.† Many fables have been told by earlier historians respecting the origin of this beautiful coinage: the ship, the sun, the cross, the lions, and, above all, the motto on the reverse, "*Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat*," have each been the subject of curious conjecture; and according to writers of the seventeenth century, a whole volume of alchemical learning is folded up in those mystic signs. But however greatly in want of money Edward may have been, we have no well-authenticated notice that he ever sought the aid of the alchemist; indeed, this visionary pursuit, so ardently followed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was at this period only just attracting the notice of the learned, nor, until the close of this century, did it become a popular belief. The motto, however, was a text which at this period was considered as a most efficacious spell against thieves; and

* Hallam, vol. i. p. 73 (note).

† Ruding.

it thus affords a curious picture of the firm persuasion which all classes entertained of the usefulness of spells derived from sacred writ, when we find the highest class of coin in the kingdom protected by this superstitious device.

During this year, Edward directed his attention to the formation of his round table at Windsor, an institution which Froissart has confounded with his later institution—the order of the Garter; as he also confounds the building of a large room, wherein the round table was placed, with the subsequent rebuilding of Windsor Castle. This festival of the round table was, however, conducted with great splendour. The *Fœdera* contains numerous precepts for impressing carpenters from all parts for the work, as well as for seizing whatever carriages might be necessary to convey materials to Windsor. The same collection gives us a curious view both of the necessities of Edward, and his unwillingness to allow them to be known; this is a precept, addressed to Thomas de Melcheburne and his brother, to redeem “the great crown of England,” from four German merchants, to whom it had been pledged for a certain sum (the amount is not stated), and “secretly and securely to deliver it to us.” The round table, we are told, described a circumference of six hundred feet; and anxious to collect together as numerous an array of knights to fill it as the fabled king Arthur, Edward, early in the spring, sent his heralds throughout France, Burgundy, Hainault, Brabant, and Scotland, to invite all brave knights and esquires, offering to all who might come letters of safe-conduct

for fifteen days after its conclusion. Many right-valiant knights, we are told, availed themselves of this courteous invitation; but Edward saw with vexation, that not one of the chivalry of France accepted his offer. The feast was held on St. George's day, a saint who had even then been long considered the tutelar saint of England; and thither came knights in countless numbers, who received a grateful welcome from Philippa, and three hundred dames and damsels, all of high birth, and all, according to the exact letter of Geffry of Monmouth, and Master Wace, clothed like the ladies of king Arthur's court, in robes of similar form and colour. The feasts and tourneys lasted a fortnight, and then the stranger knights took their leave, to proclaim in other lands the state, and splendour, and true knightly bearing of the English king.

This friendly strife was, ere long, followed by actual war; but the chivalrous spirit that originated the one, seems also to have informed the other. "It was like a great tournament, where the combatants fought indeed *à-l'outrance*, but with all the courtesy and fair play of such an entertainment, and almost as much for the honour of their ladies."

In January, 1346, we find the first note of defiance in the precept addressed to the sheriffs, to "make ready to go with the king against Philip of Valois, who is meditating and threatening to destroy both us and ours, and, if it were possible, wholly to *blot out the English tongue*." * How forcibly is the rising

* *Fœdera*, vol. ii. p. 67. In the precept addressed to the clergy, supplicating their prayers, which immediately follows, "the English

importance of the English language, and the attachment of the mass of the people to it, expressed in these few words ! From henceforward, even to within a few days of the victory of Cressy, warlike summonses meet us on every page of the *Fœdera*. There are proclamations for vessels to come to Portsmouth ; for the sheriffs to keep watchfires burning “ upon hills and other high places, in case of invasion ; ” precepts for men at arms, hobelars, and archers, to be at Portsmouth by the quinzdeme of Easter ; and then a notice to the sheriffs of London to make public proclamation, that all the archers shall be at Tote-hill, beside Westminster, on the last day of March, before the hour of prime. Guy de Brien is next directed to select miners from the forest of Dean, with power to imprison “ such as shall rebel, or be refractory.” In April, are precepts for impressing ships, boats, rafts, and barges of ten tons and above, and for sending them to Portsmouth. At the close of June, Edward having constituted his son Lionel regent, set out for Portsmouth ; and the following memorandum, relating to the great seal, is a curious specimen of legal minuteness. “ On Sunday, the 2d of July, John Offord, chancellor, gave the great seal of the king to John de Thoresby, keeper of the privy seal, in the church of Fareham, beside Portsmouth, in the chancel, in front of the high altar, before the hour of nones, in the presence of Bartholomew Burghersh, the priest,” and three others, who are also named.

nation” is substituted for “ the English tongue.” Another proof how anxious Edward was in his popular addresses to conciliate the commons.

In splendid array did the gallant armament of Edward set sail from Portsmouth; the royal vessels painted and gilded, the sails adorned with devices, and the royal banner formed of the richest silk, and its charges of beaten gold. But the banner that quartered the arms of England and France, was not the national standard,—that was still, as it had been from ancient times, the red-cross of England on its snowy field, and that proud symbol floated from the mast-head of every vessel, and swept proudly over the royal banner. The array of the knights, too, was gorgeous. At this period plate armour had wholly superseded chain-mail; and the brilliant effect of the dazzling steel was heightened by the splendour of the surcoat, which, formed of thick silk or leather, was always blazoned with the armorial bearings of the family, either in embroidery or painting. Across this was often placed the graceful scarf, the gift of the knight's ladye-love, and mostly embroidered with various devices, among which the *fleur de souvenance*, the forget-me-not, held the foremost place, the work of her own fair hand. The helmet, at this period, was frequently the pointed steel cap of an earlier period, which, when worn by prince or noble, was always encircled with the coronet appropriated to his rank: but it often approached nearer the helmet form, and was surmounted by the crest, and often by a ribbon or brodered glove, a token of remembrance of his mistress. The shields still continued of the heater shape, although occasionally some approaching to the oval form were borne; and these, as well as the surcoat, always

displayed the arms. The lance, which was generally from ten to twelve feet in length, displayed the pennon, a large streamer formed of cloth or silk, on which the knight's crest was mostly blazoned. The sword, long and narrow, of the finest steel, with a plain cross handle, was used both for war and for devotion ; since, when fixed in the ground it formed the crucifix, on which the knight fixed his eyes when the short mass was said, ere the combatants set lance in rest, and rushed on their foemen. Such was the chivalric equipment: the men-at-arms, the crossbowmen, and the archers, wore but slight armour. An iron head-piece, and breast-plate, and shoulder-pieces, over a stout frock of thick leather, seem to have been their only defensive armour ; their weapons were, the huge bill, which few save the stout English yeomanry could wield, for the bill-man ; and for the crossbow-man, the crossbow, a curious instrument, which set in the ground, and the short bow attached to it, was then wound up by a windlass, which threw the bolt, (the short and thick arrow always used in the crossbow) a considerable distance. But the crossbow was seldom used by the English yeomanry ; their highest-prized weapon was the longbow, in the use of which, for strength of arm and for accuracy of aim, they were unrivalled throughout Europe. The bow, always six feet in length, was carried in the left hand, and in a broad belt of leather was placed the "sheaf of arrows," twenty-four in number, and each a yard long.*

* Some writers have regretted that we have no exact description of the arrow used by our forefathers. The following extract, however,

Accompanied by his valiant chivalry, and his unrivalled archer-band, Edward landed at La Hogue, and advancing toward Paris, sent his challenge to Philip, and then retiring into Ponthieu, awaited the coming of his adversary. It was at Cressy, a village four leagues beyond Abbeville, that the first decisive victory was gained,—a victory not only interesting from the circumstance of the young prince Edward, although little more than sixteen years old, winning his spurs, and for the chivalric character of the whole scene, but for the proof it gave of the unmatched bravery of the English commons. “Not the nobility of England, not the feudal tenants, won the battles of Cressy and Poitiers, for these were fully matched in the ranks of France; but the yeomen, who drew the bow with strong and steady arms, accustomed to its use in their native fields, and rendered fearless by personal competence, and civil freedom.”* On the details of this battle, as every historian gives a full, and, in most instances, a fairly accurate account, it is unnecessary to dwell, and we follow Edward and his triumphant army to Calais, which, strongly fortified and well-victualled, refused to submit. Before this important stronghold Edward encamped with his whole army; and when some officers from the French king were sent to reconnoitre, they found the English soldiers comfortably lodged in huts, with magazines of arms at regular distances,

supplies the most minute information:—“At the hour of vespers, the said John, with one bow of yew strung with whipcord, in his left hand, did shoot with one barbed-arrow made of ash and feathered with goose feathers, the said point being made of steel and maple, and struck him in the side.” Vide the “Chronicle of Dunstaple” (1284).

* Hallam.

and even markets for provisions. The inhabitants of Calais, determined to hold out as long as possible, and with a cruelty which almost induces us to consider their eventual hard treatment as a just retribution, sent all those who possessed no stock of provisions out of the town; and seventeen hundred men, women, and children, were turned adrift on the mercy of a besieging army. But here the gentle spirit of chivalry, and the christian feeling of the middle ages prevailed. The English were touched with their destitution, and asked the cause: they said, because they had nothing to eat. The answer was reported to the king, and he ordered them all a plentiful dinner, gave them "two sterlings a piece of charity and alms," and directed that they should pass on in safety; "whereat," says Froissart, "many prayed right heartily for the king."

While Edward was engaged in the siege of Calais, the king of Scotland took the opportunity of invading the northern counties of England. During this time Philippa had chiefly resided at Windsor Castle, where her fifth son, William of Windsor, since the departure of the king, was born; but on hearing of this invasion, she immediately set out for Newcastle, assembled an army of about twelve thousand men, and, going from company to company, urged each "to do their duty, to defend the honour of their lord the king, bidding every man to be of good heart and courage, in the name of God; promising them that she would remember them as well, or better, than if her lord the king were there in person; and so she departed from them, recommending them to God and

St. George." So spirited an address could not fail of effect; besides, as Froissart on another occasion remarks, "from the joy of being cheered by so beautiful a lady, one man in time of need ought to be worth three;" and so it was now, for although the Scots were fifty thousand strong, the little band of English bore themselves right valiantly—the Scots were defeated with great slaughter, and their king became a prisoner. Then Philippa mounted her palfrey, rode to the field beside Neville's Cross, where the battle had been fought, and thanked her liegemen right courteously.*

Shortly after Philippa embarked for Calais, where she spent the winter, and where, although the town still held out, Edward kept a splendid court. At length, in the following August, this important town capitulated. The story of the surrender of Calais is familiar to every reader, as well as the gentle part which Sir Walter Manny unsuccessfully took, and the more cogent pleadings of Philippa, which were crowned with success. The narrative is in Froissart's best manner; and the arguments of Sir Walter Manny, on the ground of knightly generosity, are characteristically followed by the simple, but more effective pleas of the queen. "Ah, gentle Sir, since I have crossed the seas with great danger to see you, I have never asked you one favour, and now I

* The Scottish historians have endeavoured to throw discredit on that part of Froissart's narrative of this battle, which represents Philippa as being present, since it is not mentioned by the other contemporary historians; but Mr. Turner remarks, that if we discredit every event which only Froissart relates, we must give up much important knowledge relative to this glorious reign. There is nothing in the public documents of this period to disprove Froissart's narrative.

earnestly ask, as a gift, for the sake of the son of the blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these six men." The king looked at her for some time in silence, and then said, " Ah ! lady, I would you had been anywhere else than here ; you have so entreated that I cannot refuse you,—I give them to you, do what you please with them." Then the gentle queen took the six captives right joyfully to her private apartments, caused the halters to be taken off, clothed them, gave them a plentiful dinner and six nobles a piece, and caused them to be escorted safely out of the camp.

From public documents subsequently we find that Edward soon after took the chief of these six burghers, Eustace de St. Pierre, into high favour, and appointed him to a station of trust ; and this, by some of the French historians, has been considered sufficient to render Froissart's popular story very questionable. The whole narrative, however, seems quite consonant with the respective characters of the three chief agents ; and the fact that Eustace de St. Pierre was afterwards taken into high favour, seems rather to corroborate the narrative of Froissart ; for Edward's impetuosity of temper is well known, and what was more likely than that when he afterwards reflected upon the whole story of the devoted conduct of these six men, he should have been anxious to atone for his harshness, and to have loaded those with favours whom, but a short time before, he determined to destroy ?

Several English writers have reflected upon the chivalrous character of Edward, on account of his

harsh sentence upon these burghers ; but a French historian, M. L'Evesque, remarks, that viewing the whole circumstances of the siege, few towns have capitulated on easier terms. Calais was a most important place, it was the key of France, and most advantageously situated in respect to England ; the victorious army of Edward had been detained more than a twelvemonth before its walls ; and a long and obstinate defence, by the common laws of warfare, is always repaid by a corresponding severity. That Edward, as one writer has remarked, could feel for the knight, while he was callous to the sufferings of the burgess, is a truthless libel against a monarch who, better perhaps than any other, deserved the name of " the commons' king." The Plantagenet who was placed on the throne by the popular voice, who aided the Flemish burghers in their wars, who was the steadfast ally of their great leader Jacob Von Artavelde, who raised the burgesses of England to an equality with the landholder, who jousted and feasted with, and on one occasion actually bore the arms of a citizen of London, could not possibly have viewed the mercantile classes with cold-hearted scorn. The surrender of Calais was followed by the triumphant entry of Edward and Philippa ; and here, soon after, her fourth daughter, Margaret, was born. The importance of Calais, as a mart for English merchandize, seems to have been present to Edward's mind from the time of its surrender. He therefore determined to render it a wholly English town by dismissing the native inhabitants, and supplying their places by settlers from England ; he made it also a

staple town, and appointed from time to time some of the chief merchants of England to be "Mayor of the Staple" there.

It was soon after his return from Calais, although the exact period can scarcely be determined, that Edward established that order, which has become so renowned throughout Europe, the order of the Garter. The fabulous tales* by which many writers have sought to illustrate its origin, have been proved to be wholly without foundation by Barnes and Ashmole, and its real origin is declared in the preface to the "Black Book of the Order of the Garter," which states that it was established as an order of merit, that so "true nobility, after long and hazardous adventures, should not enviously be deprived of that honour which it hath really deserved, and that active and hardy youth might not want a spur in the profession of virtue, which is to be esteemed glorious and eternal." The wording of the latter part of this passage seems to bear some especial reference to the youthful aspirants after knightly honour; and when we remember how exultingly Edward hailed the prowess of his son at the battle of Cressy, it seems not improbable that the order of the Garter was instituted both to reward and to encourage his valour.

In regard to the symbol, bands, as Mills in his history of chivalry observes, were always regarded as an appropriate emblem of the friendly union which

* The common story of the countess of Salisbury's garter is untrue, for at this time there was no countess of that title. The lady who bore it a short time previously, was Edward's first-cousin, the celebrated Joan of Kent, who at this time was the wife of Thomas Holland, who in her right became earl of Kent; and she subsequently became Edward's daughter-in-law, by marriage with the Black Prince.

ought to subsist between knights-companions ; while the colour, blue, was at this period, as we learn from Chaucer, the peculiar symbol of constancy. It may be remarked too, that if this band had been worn about the waist, it would have interfered with the sword-belt ; if on the arm, it would have usurped the place where the lady's favour, or "*kerchief de pleasaunce*," was always bound ; the leg was therefore chosen to wear this band of knightly brotherhood ; and when we remember that in the allegorical significations of the different parts of armour, that appropriated to the leg was viewed as symbolical both of steadfastness and promptness, it is not unlikely that the garter was intended to typify the same qualities.* The motto has been the subject of much discussion ;—by some it has been considered to refer to the pure and lofty spirit of chivalry, which demanded that the knight's very thoughts should be blameless, while others have considered it as a defiance to Philip, who might probably ridicule this new institution. The latter opinion, although supported by the authority of Sir Walter Scott, seems untenable,—what was there in the order to excite ridicule ? and wherefore were the knights in all future ages to bear a motto which had reference to a mere passing sarcasm ? For it should be remembered that the motto was an important part of the institution. Now

* Dr. Barnes, in his life of Edward the Third, remarks, that from classical times a blue or purple fillet, tied about the person, was considered as a charm against storms and shipwrecks ; he considers it not improbable that this was the belief during the middle ages, and that hence the garter was a spell. In his opinion respecting the motto of this order, he follows Ashmole, who thinks it was given in allusion to Edward's claim of the kingdom of France, and that it meant "shame upon him who should think ill of that enterprise."

we call to mind the strictly chivalrous conduct of Edward in all his wars with France;—how careful he was that even the minutest points of honour should be preserved, how scrupulous in sending on each occasion a personal defiance, although as monarch of a neighbouring kingdom he was not compelled to do so by the laws of chivalry; when also we bear in mind that "*mal*," in Norman French, signifies guile or treachery, equally with its more modern meaning, it seems not improbable that Edward, determined that the conduct of the knights of the Garter should be honourable as his own, gave them for their chivalrous motto, "Shame be to him who meditates guile herein," to him, who forgetful of its noble principles, should dare to disgrace the order, even while he bore its symbol, by aught of fraud or deceit.

The patron saint of the order, although invoked in after times by the courtly title of "Knights of our Ladye," was a popular saint; his aid was implored even in Saxon times, and by mariners when in danger of shipwreck; and long before his recognition as the guardian of the order of the Garter, St. George was considered as the patron saint of England. The belief that he was the peculiar protector of those exposed to danger on the sea, seems in later times to have been combined with the belief that he was also the guardian of all those who claimed his aid on the battle-field; and his legend, which may be read in Caxton's "Golden Legend," represents him as a right valiant and right gentle knight, who well could sympathise with the chivalrous warrior throughout his varied career.

It was on St. George's day that this illustrious order was established; and Edward and his twenty-five companions,* among whom were his son, the two lords Beauchamp, lord Burghersh, sir John Chandos, and sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt, proceeded to the chapel of St. George, in gowns of russet, and mantles of fine blue cloth, "powdered with garters," with the collar of the order, to which was attached two long cordons of blue silk; and were there installed. According to Ashmole, the dress was very splendid:—the mantle was always of garter blue, embroidered all over with the device and motto; the surcoat varied in colour each year: it was sometimes scarlet, or crimson, or white, or even blue, according to the taste of the monarch, and was lined with fur. The hood, which was laid back on the neck, was the same as the mantle; and the black velvet cap, with ostrich plumes, completed the dress. But although a knightly institution, the ladies were associated as sisters of the order; and Philippa, and twenty-five ladies of noble birth, wearing dresses of the same colour, and mantles worked with the device of the Garter, took their places side by side with the knights at the round table. The jousts and tournaments which graced this high festival were most splendid; and Edward, with true knightly courtesy, invited his prisoner the king of Scotland to partake the feasts and the sports. It was on this occasion that

* It has been considered strange that in this list the name of Sir Walter Manny should not appear, since there was not another knight in Edward's court more deserving. As, from a precept in the *Fœdera*, we find that he was just about this time constituted admiral of the northern parts, he was most probably out of the country; but in the second list his name appears.

Edward assumed his favourite cognizance, the white swan, and appeared at the tournament with it blazoned both on his surcoat and shield, together with the motto, the first *English* motto ever borne by a Plantagenet :

“ Ha, ha, the wythe swanne!
By Goddes soule I am the manne.”

But these joyful celebrations were ere long followed by a season of great calamity ;—ere the close of the year, the plague, which had already ravaged, and in some parts almost depopulated, eastern Europe, had advanced to France, from whence it soon entered England. This fearful scourge seems to have been rendered more fatal by a series of wet seasons, which in the low lands produced inundations, and even in the higher, caused the crops to rot in the ground*. According to contemporary writers, its symptoms were precisely those of the later plagues which visited England ; and in the swiftness of its effects, and its fatal ravages, it closely resembled that of 1665. According to Dr. Barnes, very few of the higher classes suffered, although Dr. Stratford, archbishop

* So simple a method of accounting for a great plague would not satisfy the worthy Dr. Barnes, so he gravely tells us of an eclipse of the moon, and a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Aquarius. According to the same learned writer, monitions of this fearful scourge were abundant. There was a comet and an earthquake, and a pillar of fire over the Pope's palace at Avignon. Moreover, in Arabia, where the plague began, there was a fearful storm, in which snakes and blood were rained down. An even more curious storm visited eastern Tartary ; for there, “ huge vermin, with eight short legs and tails, and all over black,” (!!) descended in large quantities. England also came in for her share of wonders ; for, in Oxfordshire, a monstrous serpent, winged, and with two heads, with *faces and head-dresses like women*, was found. The whole chapter relating to the plague, is indeed one of the most curious in Dr. Barnes's ponderous folio, and is an amusing record of the credulity, not of the monkish historians alone, but of a Cambridge professor in the seventeenth century.

of Canterbury, and his successor, the celebrated Thomas Bradwardine, both fell victims to it; and ere the close of its ravages, the second daughter of Edward, Joan, who was betrothed to the infant of Castile, was seized with it on her arrival in Spain, and died. The mortality in England, although it cannot be precisely estimated, was certainly very great. In August, 1348, it first appeared in this country, and Bristol was first visited; changing its usual course from the east to the west, it now proceeded eastward, and ere the autumn closed, thousands died in London. It was then that the brave and gentle sir Walter Manny purchased a large piece of ground, just withoutside the city liberties, on the north, and caused it to be consecrated as a burial-ground, where, according to Stow, fifty thousand were interred. He caused also a chantry chapel to be built therein, and here in the year 1371 he founded a priory of Carthusian monks, of the salutation of the Mother of God, "to advance charity, and to aid religion," on the site of the Charterhouse, and here, the year after, he was buried*. In the eastern suburb of London, a citizen, named John Corey, also provided a cemetery; it was near East Smithfield, and there Edward, in consequence of a vow made during a tempest, subsequently founded in 1359 the Cistercian abbey of St. Mary of Grace, or Eastminster. Meanwhile Pope Clement earnestly laboured to establish

* This illustrious knight, who came over with Philippa on her marriage, as her carver, was throughout Edward's reign highly distinguished by him. He was naturalized, and created an English baron in the 21st of Edward, and he married the lady Margaret Brotherton, daughter and heiress of earl Thomas of Norfolk, uncle to Edward.

peace between the kingdoms of France and England; urging in his bull addressed to the two contending powers, its importance at a period of such severe calamity, "lest, which God forbid, that little flock which the Saviour of the world, who woundeth and healeth, hath like seed-corn preserved from destruction, should now be drowned in the waves of commotion, or swallowed up in the wretched tempests of war." The laudable endeavours of the pontiff were not without success;—although peace did not follow, the truce was renewed, and Philip soon after dying, the truce was continued with his son king John.

About this time, a characteristic and flattering appeal was made to Edward by two knights of a distant land, who seem to have viewed the court of the English king as the high court of honour. During 1350 a fierce war raged between the soldan of Babylon and the king of Armenia, and to aid their Christian brethren in this war, many valiant knights joined the forces of the Armenian king. Among these were a Cypriot knight, named John de Visconti, a relation of the king of Cyprus, and a knight of France, named Thomas de la Marche, the illegitimate brother of the French king. Both these knights held high ranks in the Christian army, but hostilities broke out between them, and John de Visconti charged the French knight with having agreed for a certain sum to betray the Christian army to the paynim. Thomas de la Marche fiercely denied the charge, and a challenge to mortal combat was given and accepted. Hereupon their brethren in arms proposed that the battle should be fought in presence of king Edward,

as "the most worthy and honourable knight in Christendom," and in the beginning of September they arrived in England. Here, in presence of the king and his court, Visconti accused de la Marche of treason, and flung down his gauntlet. The accused took it up, again asserted his innocence, and accepted the challenge. King Edward then appointed a day for the combat, and as it was no gallant tournament, no friendly jousting, but a solemn judicial contest; neither the noble tilting-ground of Windsor castle, nor the smooth green plain of Smithfield, was chosen, but the lists within the king's palace at Westminster. Here they met in the presence of the king, the prince, and the whole court; and right gallantly did they fight. Their lances having been broken upon each other's shield, they alighted, and drawing their swords, renewed the combat on foot; when their swords were broken, they grappled together in deadly struggle, and fell, still contending for the victory. At length it was gained by de la Marche, who having armed the joints of his gauntlet with sharp pricks of steel, struck them with such force against his foeman's barred visor, that Visconti was compelled to cry for mercy; Edward hereupon threw down his warder, and adjudged the victory to the French knight*.

The continuance of the truce afforded Edward leisure to pursue those plans of magnificence which he never lost sight of; about this time he therefore caused great improvements to be made in the palace of Westminster, where he also founded St.

* Barne's, p. 452.

Stephen's chapel, and with the aid of his illustrious chancellor, William of Wykeham, he soon after commenced the entire rebuilding of Windsor castle. The earliest notice of this only palace worthy of the monarchs of England, is found in a charter of Edward the Confessor to the abbey of Westminster, in which it forms one of the gifts. The beauty of its site, and the extent of the surrounding forests, seem also to have struck the hunter-king, who "loved the tall deer as though he had been their father," from the first moment that he visited it; and in a charter to the monks of Westminster, dated in the very first year of his reign, William exchanges lands in Essex for "Windlesore," characteristically remarking, "because it is so near the Thames, and the woods so fit for game, and many other things, meet and necessary for kings." Here, on the summit of the hill, the conqueror built a strong castle, where he held his court in 1070. His sons, Rufus and Henry, frequently dwelt here, and by all the Plantagenets it was chosen as a favourite residence. The first Edward and queen Elinor seem to have been greatly attached to the spot; and from this king New Windsor received its charter as a free borough. It is probable that the old castle still remained; and as by this time, even if not ruinous, it must have become, with its gloomy keep, its loop-hole windows, and small and dark chambers, unfit for a royal residence, in the magnificent, and, in respect to England, peaceful era of Edward the Third; a palace, which while it should preserve the name of castle, together with some of its outward characteristics, should also contain the

lofty and well-lighted festive hall, the tilt-yard, the terrace, and ranges of apartments for knights "in weeds of peace," seemed necessary to complete the state of that monarch, whose name resounded throughout all Christendom. The particulars respecting the building of this magnificent pile, are unfortunately very few. From a precept in Edward's 23rd year, we find certain surveyors appointed, who have power to impress "hewers of stone and carpenters," and others, who are to purchase stone and timber for the works at Windsor; two years after we find John Brocas and Oliver de Bordeaux directed "to survey, and to encourage the industrious and punish the idle." In Edward's 30th year, we find William of Wykeham, although at this time he was only thirty-two years old, appointed clerk of the works, and chief surveyor, and from this time the work seems to have proceeded with comparative rapidity. In 1360, precepts were directed to all the sheriffs to impress masons throughout the country, to be employed at Windsor, at the king's wages; and from the return we find that most of the counties sent forty each *. In 1363, the works appear to have been almost finished, and precepts are issued, empowering Henry de Stamoure and John Brampton to purchase glass, and to impress twenty-four glaziers to work at London, and twelve at Windsor, the latter, being probably wholly employed in fitting the windows. This last precept is very important, as showing that the trade of the

* *Vide Feadera.* In this new building the Round Table was not forgotten, for in the Issue Roll, 30th year, is an entry "to the prior of Merton in money paid to the same prior, for *fifty-two oaks*, taken from the wood of the said prior near Reading, for the round table at Windsor."

glazier was even now common, and that the lower class of these workmen could be obtained with the same facility as masons, carpenters, or smiths. Twenty years seem to have been employed on this magnificent castle, and the year 1363 was probably the date of its completion.

While Edward was engaged on these works, we find but few notices of Philippa; during this time she was however employed in refounding that institution, peculiarly under the guardianship of the queens consorts, the hospital of St. Katherine. She rebuilt that noble church, which a few years since was destroyed; she founded a chantry there, and granted a new charter to the inmates. The rules which she made contain several curious particulars. It is enacted that "the brethren shall wear a straight coat and clothing, with a mantle of a black colour, on which shall be the sign of the holy St. Katherine," (a wheel,) "but *green* clothes, or *red*, or those which are striped," are entirely prohibited. So eager in an age of excessive show in dress were the conventual orders to lay aside their "sad coloured" vestments for gayer and more costly apparel. It is also enacted that the brethren shall neither play at dice nor frequent the ale-house, and also, that neither brethren nor sisters shall stay out "beyond the time of ringing the fire-bells." So late was the curfew considered as the general time of retiring to rest.

In 1355 war again began between England and France, and Edward, after declaring in his proclamation that, "having been deceived in his treaty of peace, he now resumes war," sent his son, the Black

Prince into Guienne, while he proceeded to Calais. The conduct of the Black Prince in Guienne was singularly distinguished by prudence and valour :—taking advantage of the feuds that disturbed the kingdom of France, he proceeded from Bordeaux to Auvergne with two thousand men-at-arms, and six thousand archers, and entering Berry, gained much spoil. On receiving intelligence that the king of France was advancing towards him with fifty thousand men, he resolved to retire through Touraine and Poitou into Guienne, but the French king, relying on his own superior forces, pushed onward and came up with him two leagues from Poitiers, having so effectually secured the passes, that retreat was most difficult. The prince now perceiving that a battle was inevitable, rode along the ranks of his little army, bidding them not to be cast down, since victory did not depend on numbers, but on the will of Almighty God. “ Wherefore, for God’s sake, be of good courage and combat manfully, for, if it please Him and St. George, I will this day play the part of a good knight, and England shall never have to pay my ransom.”

Encouraged by these knightly words, the little band determined to stand firmly, and with the red cross of England waving proudly over their heads, they awaited the coming of the French chivalry. These advanced with fierce impetuosity, for they had no doubt of gaining the day ; but the English archer-band, even as at Cressy, “ let fly their arrows so wholly together,” that the unmailed horses were thrown into confusion, and the heavily armed knights

advanced. But the archers, keeping their ranks, and "stepping firmly together," with that steadfast courage which has ever been the characteristic of the English soldier, quailed not at the approach of the chivalry of France; and when the Black Prince and his company descended the hill, knight and archer mingled in the press in true knightly fashion, and the tough yew bow did equal service with the pennoned lance. Never was victory more complete:—many hundred knights were taken, together with the king of France and his fourth son Philip; and the sequel to this battle was worthy its commencement, for never had the graceful and gentle feelings of chivalry, fairer scope for their display.

When the Black Prince learnt that the king of France was taken, he met his prisoner and made him a low obeisance, presented wine and spices with his own hands, and "comforted him as much as he was able, the which he well knew how to do." He invited him to supper, and served him as the esquire was accustomed to serve the knight; and, though earnestly entreated to sit down at table, he refused, saying he was unworthy of so great an honour.* Seeing his royal guest much cast down at his sad reverse, he again endeavoured to cheer him, remarking, that the result of battles was in the hands of God, who alone had pleased to deny him the victory; "and, sire, you have yet great reason to rejoice, although

* To enable us duly to appreciate the graceful courtesy of the Black Prince, we should remember that it was a point of state etiquette for the king of France always to dine by himself. The refusal of his captor, therefore, to sit at the table with him, was a delicate recognition of his rank as king.

the day was not yours, for you have gained herein the highest praise, and have surpassed all the best and bravest warriors of France. Nor do I say this to beguile your sorrow, neither to bring your losses to your remembrance, but all of us who have seen what every man performed, are agreed to award the prize and chaplet unto your majesty."

The story of the triumphal entry into London of the Black Prince with his prisoner, is told in every history of England;—as a sequel to that story, it may be added, that the courtesy which marked his conduct on that occasion, was but a transcript of the general conduct of the royal family toward one who was considered rather as a guest than a captive. On his arrival in London, the palace of the Savoy was appointed for the residence of the French king, where he was often visited by the king and queen, whom he in his turn visited, and was entertained by them sumptuously. He also accepted the invitations of the nobles, and was, on one occasion, entertained with royal splendour by the princely merchant, sir Henry Picard, who had the honour of seeing at his mansion in the Vintry, the king, his illustrious son, the Black Prince, and the kings of France, Scotland, and Cyprus.* The captive monarch was subsequently removed to Windsor Castle, where he participated in those favourite amusements of the age, hunting and hawking.

It was probably in celebration of the victory of Poitiers that Edward, early in the following spring, sent forth his heralds to proclaim a solemn tournament,

* Vide Stow.

throughout France, Germany, Brabant, Flanders, and Scotland. This tournament was held on St. George's day, in Smithfield, in the presence of Philippa and the ladies of her court, and the kings of France and Scotland, and it seems to have been a splendid spectacle. But, two years after, one, even more splendid, and from the circumstances attending it, most gratifying to the citizens of London, took place. Early in the spring of 1359, a challenge was publicly given by John Lufkin, the lord mayor, and Barnes and Bury, the sheriffs, that they, together with twenty-one aldermen, would "keep the field for three days against all comers." The day arrived, a goodly assembly of ladies, and knights, and nobles, were present in Smithfield, to witness the knightly doings of these "lords of the city," who advanced in rich tilting armour, bearing the city arms on their surcoats, and their shields. The field was held three days by them, and many deeds of knightly valour performed; but when, at the close of the festivals, the combatants disarmed, the assembly found that it was king Edward, who had fought under the bearing of the lord mayor, and the Black Prince, and Lionel, duke of Clarence, who had borne those of the sheriffs, while the two younger princes, John of Gaunt, and Edmund of Langley, together with nineteen noblemen, had personated the twenty-one aldermen. This tournament has never received from historians the notice its importance demands. That a lord mayor and sheriffs should proclaim a tournament, shows that they were regarded as unquestionably possessing the same rights as the

privileged classes; and it also shows that the use of knightly arms must have made part of the common education of the wealthier order of citizens; while that the monarch himself, should lay aside his hereditary arms to assume, not those of some knight of romance, not those even of his favourite exemplar, king Arthur, but the arms of the city, and the style and bearings of merely a wealthy merchant,—forcibly proves how little the strict demarcations of rank, or that exclusive feeling which prevailed under the Tudors and Stuarts, had place in the reign of the most illustrious of our Plantagenets.

Meanwhile the king of France still continued a prisoner in England; at length, by the treaty of Bretigny, he was released on condition of paying a ransom of 500,000 crowns; and the long list of jewels and plate presented to the captive king, and the French lords, and which altogether amounts to 2800 marks, exhibits the graceful courtesy which to the end marked the conduct of the English king. By the treaty of Bretigny, the seven provinces of Aquitaine were ceded to Edward, on condition of his renunciation of his claim to the kingdom of France; and content with an agreement which ensured to him the possession of territories almost as extensive as those enjoyed by the first Plantagenets, he laid aside the title and the arms of France.

About 1361, England was first visited by a stranger who, although on his arrival he was probably scarcely noticed by the brilliant chivalry of king Edward's court, was destined to become their chronicler, and the most delightful of historians of a

singularly romantic and brilliant age, Froissart. As this celebrated writer's real history is so little known, and as it was the liberal encouragement of Philippa that led him to proceed with his work, a short notice of this illustrious clerk of her chamber, the chronicler of the exploits of Cressy and Poitiers, can scarcely be out of place in a memoir of his illustrious patroness.

Johan Froissart was born at Valenciennes in 1337, and from a passage in one of his poems, it has been conjectured that his father was a herald-painter. From another of these we find that, from the time of his leaving school, he loved joyous company and fair apparel, and always wore violets or red or white roses, and was in high esteem with the young damsels, and led a life as though he should never know sorrow. He, however, did not neglect study, but gave his mind to many kinds of learning, particularly history, and in this he became so well versed, that when scarcely more than twenty years of age, he undertook, at the request of his "dear lord and master, messire Robert de Namur, knight and lord of Beaufort," to write the history of the wars of his times, particularly those that were consequent on the battle of Poitiers. Four years after this he came to England, led thither, doubtless, by the fame of Philippa's liberality, and presented to her a portion of his work. In the court of Philippa, the kind attentions he received, and the admiration which his verses soon awakened (for Froissart in his youth was even better known as a poet than as a chronicler), were insufficient to remove the settled melancholy of this gifted young man; and the gentle queen urged him to acquaint

her with the cause. He then confessed that, early attached to the study of romances, there was one he especially delighted in, and this was *Cleomades*.^{*} This book he first saw in the hands of a young lady, who was reading it, and who invited him to read it with her; they subsequently agreed to exchange their books, and he therefore brought her a romance called "*Le Baillou d'Amours*," and slipped within the leaves a "*balade*," in which he declared his love. He now heard the sad truth that she was on the point of marriage. An illness of more than three months, and which reduced him almost to the grave, was the consequence, and he set out, on his recovery, to England, vainly hoping to forget her. The gentle Philippa sympathised deeply in this tale of disappointed hope; she gave him money, she provided him fitting equipage, and bade him forthwith return to his native land, and endeavour to obtain his lady, stipulating, however, that he should return to her service. Froissart took his departure, he sought his lady, no longer a portionless young writer, but the secretary and protégé of the English queen, the wife of the hero of Cressy. But the lady was inexorable, or perhaps, faithful to her earlier lover; and the "*gay and gallant*" Froissart, as he has been so often called by those who were unacquainted with his history, returned heart-broken to England. He now

^{*} The romance of *Cleomades* belonged to that class which were founded on the adventures of Charlemagne and his Paladins. It was composed towards the close of the thirteenth century by Adenez, the king of the minstrels. He was attached to the court of Brabant, and as he is said to have undertaken to compose this romance at the instance of Marie of Brabant, and Blanche of Bretagne, it was probably a tale of lady-love. Of the other romance there is no notice extant.

closely attached himself to the service of his liberal patroness, and became "clerk of her chamber." This was in 1361, and here he remained five years, during which time he made several voyages at Philippa's expense, to procure materials for his *Chronicles*, which he laboured at with unremitting attention, save when, at the queen's request, he composed "balades" and sonnets. In 1366, he was at Bordeaux, when Richard was born, and he afterwards accompanied the Black Prince in his Spanish wars; the prince, however, soon after, fearing lest some danger might attack his favourite, sent him back to his mother. The following year he went to Italy, and was present at that gorgeous entertainment given by the earl of Savoy, on occasion of the marriage of Lionel, duke of Clarence, with the daughter of the duke of Milan. At this feast he exultingly tells us, that they danced a "virelay" of his own composing; and that he received from the earl of Savoy that genuine minstrel's guerdon, a "cotte hardi," worth twenty gold florins, and from the king of Cyprus forty ducats.

In 1369 he lost his kind patroness; and he seems immediately after to have quitted England. It was probably about this time that he entered the church, for soon after we find him rector of Lescines; and while here he appears to have been engaged on his *Chronicles*, since Abbé Goujet found, in a manuscript journal of the bishop of Chartres, chancellor to the duke of Anjou, that in 1381 that prince caused "fifty-six quires of the chronicle of Johan Froissart," which he had sent to be illuminated, for the purpose

of sending to the king of England, to be seized. As there was at this time war with France, it is likely that Froissart was on this account deprived of Lescines; and he next attached himself to the court of Wencelaus, duke of Brabant. This prince was a poet, and Froissart had the honour of contributing some pieces of his own composition, to a collection of the duke's own poetry, which bore the title of "Meliador, or the Knight of the Golden Sun." The duke died ere this work was completed, and on Froissart devolved the task of finally preparing it for the public eye. He wrote a poetical preface to it, in which he says that the good duke of Brabant, whose soul is now in Paradise, "was an amorous, and gracious, and chivalrous prince, and much pleasure had I in making this book, although he can never see it." His next situation was that of clerk of the chapel to Guy, earl of Blois; and while in his service we find him travelling about to Hainault, Paris, and Languedoc. In 1395, he revisited England, when the duke of York introduced him to Richard, who received him kindly, and accepted from him the volume entitled *Meliador*. "This book he examined attentively," says Froissart, "for it was fairly written, and illuminated, and bound in crimson velvet, with ten nails of silver-gilt, and a gilded rose in the middle, besides two great gilded clasps, ornamented with roses, and richly chased." He continued in London only three months, and then, receiving from the king a hundred nobles in a silver-gilt goblet, he departed. In 1397 he lost his patron, the earl of Blois, whom he is considered to

have survived about four years. At the time of his death he was canon and treasurer of the collegiate church of Chimay, and here he was probably buried.*

The fame of Froissart in the present day, wholly rests upon his delightful chronicles, but during his lifetime it seems rather to have rested upon his poetry. Besides a countless number of rondeaux, virelays, sonnets, and such small compositions, he was the author of two long allegorical poems, the one entitled "*Le Paradis d'Amour*," and the other "*L'Horloge Amoreuse*." The first of these is formed upon the plan of the "*Roman de la Rose*," and, like that more celebrated work, is a dream in which *Doux-penser*, *Plaisance*, *Beau-regard*, and *Bel-accueil*, with twenty other allegorical personages, dance, sing, weave chaplets, and inflict woefully long and dull homilies on the patient sleeper. The other piece is curious, from the occasional light it throws on the arts and the manners and customs of that day; though, as may well be supposed, sufficiently extravagant in its plan, and far-fetched in its conceits, since it is a long comparison of a clock and all its movements, with those of "a living and loving heart." Contemplating the vivid pictures in his chronicles, we might almost wish that Froissart had turned his attention to narrative poetry, for surely he, who has painted with such picturesque effect and genuine poetic feeling, the long and eager watch of *Jane de Montfort*, until the English fleet appeared in the distant sea, and the graceful episodes of

* Vide the memoir of Froissart by the Abbé Goujet, in vol xi. of l'Académie des Inscriptions.

Eustace de Ribeaumont, and the relief of Puirenon, had the true feeling of the poet; but, trammelled both in subject and in diction, when he attempted rhyme, the ease, the spirit, the naïve grace, which characterise Froissart beyond any other prose writer of his age, wholly vanished away.

In regard to the historical merit of his chronicles much difference of opinion has existed; later researches have, however, proved that for a recorder of "hearsay evidence," as Froissart¹ must in great measure be considered, he is fairly correct. Several of his statements, which were formerly impugned, have of late years been verified, by the testimony of recently discovered contemporary documents; and his sincerity and perfect good faith in whatever he advances, renders him, with all his occasional errors, a far safer guide than those more modern historians, who have too often made history speak their own opinions, and advocate their own peculiar views.

A valuable addition to our literature, would a chronicle like that of Froissart, and written by an English eye-witness of the events of this glorious reign, have been; but English *prose* literature was as yet almost unknown, although the despised language of England was now steadily making its way; and in the year 1362 it was first recognised in the great council of the land, by a statute which enacted that all pleas in courts of justice, shall be pleaded, debated, and judged in English*. It would be most unjust, even in a passing notice of this subject, to

* Hallam, vol. iii. p. 575. The proceedings in parliament were, however, still carried on in French.

forget the claims of Sir John Mandeville, the father of English prose. This venerable traveller to the far regions of "Baldak, and Tartary, and Cathay," was a native of St. Alban's, and commenced his travels in the year 1322, and having roamed about for many years, seeing many wonders, and hearing many right marvellous tales, returned to his native land in 1356, and there put forth his travels in Latin, French, and English, "that every manne of my nacionn may understande it." Independently of the claim of being the earliest English prose writer, to Sir John Mandeville the praise of being a most enterprising and observant traveller is due. In his narrative, the wonders and splendours of the "far londe of ye Este" are described with truth and spirit; while the marvellous tales so liberally interspersed through his work, and which have been the means of rendering his very name a synonym for falsehood, are never told by him as an eye-witness, but are always introduced as "marvelles whereof menne tellen us." Many of the wonders, too, which he speaks of as having actually seen, and to which the last century refused its belief, have been proved by modern travellers; and his stories of the tree which produced wool, of the red-haired dwarfs, and the huge creature that, snail-like, carried a shell on its back big enough to shelter four men, have been verified in the cotton-tree, the orang-outang, and the gigantic tortoise.

Almost contemporary with Sir John Mandeville was Ranulph Higden, who but a few years later commenced his *Polychronicon*—a curious and inte-

resting specimen of our early prose literature; but to a more illustrious writer than either of these did England owe the triumphant establishment of her native tongue—to John Wickliffe. The force, the spirit, the facility of his style, are unrivalled by any prose writer either of this, or of the fifteenth century; and we wonder not that from the time that he displayed its copious energies, the supremacy of our noble language was achieved.

The period subsequent to the peace of Bretigni was marked by the enactment of many laws, which showed the vigilant attention paid by Edward to whatever might benefit our trade and commerce, more especially that of our great staple, wool and woollen cloth. Some of his minor enactments are curious, and characteristic of the interest which he always evinced for the general welfare of the people. In 1361 an ordinance was issued, directing that all beasts intended for food, should be slaughtered at Stratford for the supply of the eastern part of the city, and at Knightsbridge for the supply of the western parts, “because the air is corrupted by reason of killing beasts in the city, and sickness is produced.” From this enactment it would appear that London had recovered from the severe visitation of 1349, and again become very populous. In 1368 a curious proclamation appears*, respecting the purveyors of the king, the queen, and the Black Prince, directing that “*l'orrible noum*” of purveyors shall be changed to the name of “*echatour*,” directing also that “ready payment” shall be made for everything.

* Vol. ii. *Fœdera*, p. 695.

A number of officers, whose names are given at length, are appointed, and the articles which each was to provide carefully specified;—from this we learn that the king's horses, as is the case at the present day in some parts of the Netherlands, were provided with bread, as well as beans and oats. This proclamation is followed by a precept, addressed to the sheriffs of London, directing the prices at which falcons are to be sold:—a falcon gentil 20*s.*; a tercel gentil, 10*s.*; an estor, 13*s.* 4*d.*; a tercel estor, 6*s.* 8*d.*; and the taver, 6*s.* 8*d.*; prices much lower than in the sixteenth and earlier parts of the seventeenth century, when from £20 to £100 was frequently given for a cast (a pair) of hawks.

Although now at peace, Edward was anxious that the yeomanry, who in all his wars with France had aided him so effectually with their "good bows," should not forget their practice of that weapon, in the use of which they were unrivalled; he, therefore, the same year, issued precepts to the sheriffs of the various counties, directing that the practice of the long-bow be kept up, since "now is that art neglected, and the people spend their time in throwing stones, wood, or iron, or in playing hand-ball, football, club-ball, or in bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and other useless and dishonest games;" it is therefore enacted, that on holidays, the youth shall practise the long-bow, and that places shall be appropriated for archery.

A few years later, in 1368, we find letters of protection granted to John Vueman, William Vueman, and John Lietuyt, of Delft, to come into England

“to exercise their trade of clock-makers.” This seems to prove that clocks were becoming articles of household use, since the mere manufacturing them for churches, would scarcely afford sufficient employment for a separate trade. Long before this, a monk of Wells, in 1320, had constructed a most curious clock for the cathedral, which is still in existence, and about the same time a large clock was put up at St. Paul’s; but these were the workmanship of ingenious churchmen; and we do not find the clock-maker, as pursuing a separate trade, previously to this document. From the curious allegorical poem of Froissart, already referred to, “*L’Horloge Amoreuse*,” we derive several particulars relating to the clocks of this period. The dial marked the twenty-four hours, and was rotary, while the hand remained fixed. They seem also to have had but one hand, and when a minute-hand was required, an additional dial was provided. Instead of a pendulum, there were two little weights to advance or retard the going, and the clock required winding-up every six or eight hours.

During these the last years of the life of Philippa, we find very few notices respecting her. In 1361, the Black Prince married his second-cousin, Joan of Kent, the widow of Sir Thomas Holland, a woman of singular beauty, and commanding talents; and in 1365, Philippa’s eldest daughter, Isabel, was married to Ingelram de Coucy, earl of Bedford. Soon after her second son, Lionel, duke of Clarence, proceeded to Milan, to marry the daughter of the duke; the marriage feasts were celebrated with a magnificence which has excited the admiration of every chronicler;

but a melancholy termination was reserved for them ; the young duke having suddenly died. But the grief which Philippa felt at the unexpected, and singularly melancholy death of her son, was not destined to be long, for ere another year had passed, *she* also died. In May, 1369, a precept occurs in the *Fœdera*, granting safe-conduct to John de Lyndon, goldsmith, who, it is stated, was sent by Philippa to the duchess of Holland "with divers jewels." What these jewels were, for what purpose they were sent, or what was their value, we cannot ascertain ; this is, however, the last document relative to Philippa which can be found, and for the account of her closing scene we must turn to the touching narrative of her affectionate biographer, Froissart.

"In the meanwhile (August 1369), there fell in England a sad case, though a common, howbeit it was right piteous for the king, his children, and all his realm ; for the good queen of England, that so many good deeds had done in her time, and so many knights aided, and ladies and damsels comforted, and had so largely given of her goods to her people, and naturally loved the nation of Hainault, the country where she was born, fell sick in the castle of Windsor, and that sickness continued on her so long, that there was no remedy but death. And the good lady, when she knew and saw that there was for her no remedy but death, she desired to speak to the king her husband, and when he was before her, she put out of bed her right hand, and took the king by his right hand, who was very sorrowful of heart. Then she said, ' Sir, we have in peace and joy and great

prosperity passed all our time together ; sir, now I pray you, at our parting, that ye will grant me three requests.' The king, right sorrowfully weeping, answered, ' Madam, ask what ye will, I grant it.' ' Sir,' said she, ' I ask, first of all, that all the people I have dealt with on this side of the sea and the other, that it may please you to pay every thing I owe them ; and next, sir, all such intentions and promises as I have made to the churches, as well of this country as beyond the sea, where I have paid my devotions, that you will fulfil them ; and thirdly, I ask that it may please you to take none other sepulture, whensoever it shall please God to call you out of this transitory life, but beside me in the church of Westminster.' The king, all weeping, said, ' Madam, I grant you all your desire.' Then the good lady and queen made the sign of the cross upon her, and commended the king her husband to God, and her youngest son, Thomas, who was there beside her, and immediately she yielded up her spirit, which I surely believe the holy angels received with great joy up to heaven*."

The tidings of the death of this excellent queen caused great mourning throughout the land ; and when the news was carried to the English army at Zernehen, " every creature," says Froissart, " was sore displeased and right sorrowful." We have no documents relating to her funeral, which doubtless was conducted with great splendour, nor any notice of the day on which it took place. Her two eldest sons were absent from England ; but the king, and

* Froissart, vol. ii. chap. v.

her two youngest sons followed her to her last resting-place at Westminster abbey.

Philippa was the mother of a numerous family, of which nine attained to maturity. Five sons, Edward the Black Prince, Lionel of Antwerp, duke of Clarence, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, Edmund of Langley, duke of York, and Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Gloster, and four daughters, Isabel, countess of Bedford, Joan, who died on her arrival at Castile, Mary, duchess of Bretagne, and Margaret, countess of Pembroke.

From the entries in the issue roll of the year succeeding her death, we find several curious particulars relative to the tomb, which, with its mutilated effigy, still points out in the Confessor's chapel where the remains of Philippa of Hainault repose. From these we learn that the altar tomb of black marble was made by "John Orchard, stone-mason of London," who also made the delicate alabaster tabernacles on each side of the effigy, which, as we learn from the same entry, formerly enclosed eight angels, also of his workmanship. The effigy was, however, made by Hawkin Liege, probably a celebrated Flemish sculptor, and the sum of 200 marks was paid him for it. From the peculiar character of the pleasing, though not handsome, countenance, its evident Flemish contour, and the strong resemblance it bears both to the portraits, and the effigy of the Black Prince, we have every reason for believing that this effigy is an undoubted portrait. As a work of art, it may be considered to rank high, although the artist, trammelled by the singularly unbecoming dress, the

tight long boddice, the plain mitten sleeve, and the mantle, which instead of falling in full and graceful folds, seems, from its miserable scantiness, to be actually stuck upon the shoulders by the two corners, could not display that ease and freedom of style, which the long and gracefully flowing draperies of the thirteenth century, afforded to the earlier sculptor. The accessories of this tomb seem to have been very beautiful, and prove that the London stone-mason, was no unworthy rival of the Flemish sculptor. Those portions of the tabernacle work which yet remain, are of singularly delicate workmanship, and, in the opinion of a distinguished artist, the tomb, when perfect, must have been "in style and beauty almost without a parallel."*

The three requests which Philippa so touchingly preferred on her death-bed, were each solemnly performed by Edward. We find from contemporary documents, that he strictly caused all her debts and bequests to be paid, and he bestowed pensions on her maids of honour; he sent donations to various churches and convents which she had patronised; and finally, on his death, his remains were laid in the same vault beside her.

* *Vide* Blore's "Monumental Remains," where a restoration of this tomb will be found.

ANNE OF BOHEMIA.

CHAPTER XX.

The last years of Edward—Accession of Richard—Negotiations for his Marriage with Anne of Bohemia—Her Parentage—Insurrection of the Commons—Remarks—Arrival of Anne in England—Her Marriage—Her Religious Opinions—Hostility of some of the King's Relations towards her—Council appointed—Richard determines to dismiss his Council—Duke of Gloster leads an army to London—Sir Simon Burley executed—Remarks on Richard's Favourites—Richard reassumes his Power—Influence of Anne—Her Patronage of Chaucer—Tournament in Smithfield—Pageants at the Entry of Richard and Anne into London—Her Death—Her Funeral—His Deposition—Conclusion.

IT had been well for the fame, no less than the happiness of Edward the Third, if the same year that closed the life of Philippa, had also closed his own. From that period to his death, a succession of misfortunes pursued him. In 1370, the gallant Sir John Chandos was killed in France; the next year witnessed the death of his old friend and brother in arms, sir Walter Manny; and when, for the last time, he went in person with a noble fleet to the scene of his former triumphs, the very elements seemed to have conspired against him;—the fleet was dispersed, and he returned unsuccessful. His son, the duke of Lancaster, was equally unfortunate: he led a gallant army almost to the gates of Paris, only to perish by famine and sickness; while, to crown the measure

of his domestic troubles, the eldest son of the Black Prince, a child just seven years old, died, and the father returned from Guienne in almost the last stage of mortal disease. But, worse by far, although visited by such accumulated misfortunes, although weakened in bodily health, and fast sinking into old age, the unhappy monarch seemed scarcely to feel them; and entrapped by the arts of a worthless woman, he gave or withheld justice at her demand, lavished upon her the jewels that had belonged to Philippa, and caused a tournament to be held in her honour in Smithfield, where she presided as "lady of the Sun," although the Black Prince, heir to his fame and to his crown, was at that very time drawing near his end.

In April, 1376, the parliament met, and the indignation with which they viewed the influence of Alice Perrers, led to their first assertion of that great constitutional right, the power of impeachment. At this important session, supported by the influence of the Black Prince, who "rallied his expiring energies for this domestic combat," both houses agreed to petition the king, that, considering the mischiefs that had heretofore arisen from want of suitable councilors, "it will be for the honour of the king and profit of all the land, that the council of the lord king should be strengthened by nobles, prelates, and others, to remain continually, to the number of ten or twelve, in such manner, that no weighty business shall pass, or be deliberated upon, without the assent or advice of the whole." The commons next proceeded to urge, that unless great misappropriation of the king's

wealth had taken place, the large ransoms of the French and Scottish kings, together with those of so many other prisoners, must have been amply sufficient for the exigencies of the state, but that, "through the private advantage of some near the king, and of others by their collusion, the king and kingdom are impoverished." They therefore proceeded to impeach the lords Latimer and Neville, together with four merchants*."

The whole tone of this petition, as may be judged even from the foregoing short extracts, is very bold; but the part which demands, that the king, who was but little past the age of sixty, should be placed in a state of absolute pupillage, and be guided by an actual regency of "ten or twelve nobles, prelates, and others," appears both degrading and insulting in the last degree, to him, who had been until so lately, deemed the first monarch of his age. And yet, to this, not merely did the Black Prince assent, although always distinguished by the most respectful deportment towards his father, but we have strong testimony that this insulting proposal was actually made at his desire.

Surely this circumstance may afford us a key to the real state of the king. From the accounts of

* Rot. Parl., vol. ii. p. 329. Whether Alice Perrers were really the king's mistress or not, there is no reason to doubt her rapacity. The gift of the queen's jewels to her is sufficient proof, and for that we have the precept in the *Fœdera*. The evidence of the chamberlain of Edward, which will be found in Rot. Parl., vol. iii. p. 12, seems conclusive both of her great influence over the aged king, and of his imbecility. In this she is represented as keeping closely about him, tutoring him in his answers, and sitting beside him at the bed's head. In a subsequent petition she states, that she was even then the wife of Sir William Windsor; the fact of her having unduly influenced the king is, however, not affected by this avowal.

every contemporary historian, we find that he was in a state of great bodily weakness ; might not this also have been accompanied by weakness of mind ? In that case we have an easy solution of every difficulty that has posed preceding historians. Reduced to a state of second childhood, the old man would naturally turn to the favourite maid of honour of his late queen, as one to whose company he had been accustomed, and her ascendancy might increase, until the family, as in the case of a private individual, might find it an imperative duty to interfere. Had the Black Prince been in health, he would most probably have assumed the regency himself, but in the near prospect of death, and anxious to provide alike for the security of a father sunk in second childhood, and a son not yet emerged from *it* ; fearing naturally, in an age when the laws of succession were far from having been permanently fixed, that to elevate the ambitious John of Gaunt to the regency would be almost equivalent to making him an offer of the crown, the appointment of a council to superintend the affairs of state, seems to have been dictated by wise policy. To all these propositions the king readily yielded ; and to separate him wholly from his former advisers, an ordinance was also passed, prohibiting “ all women from prosecuting suits of others in courts of justice,” in which Alice Perrers is especially forbidden, on pain of banishment.

The anxiety and exertion attendant on passing these important provisions, exhausted the already failing strength of the Black Prince ;—he withdrew from the council table to his bed, from whence he

never rose, and died on Trinity Sunday, June 8th, at the palace of Westminster, leaving an only son heir to his possessions, but neither to his prosperity nor his fame. The body of this illustrious prince was conveyed at his express desire to Canterbury, and it was accompanied thither by the members of that parliament with whom he had so lately sat, and a large concourse of nobles ; and all the splendid observances which at this period always graced the obsequies of princes, were profusely bestowed on his funeral. The body was interred in that part of the cathedral called the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, where the noble tomb, with its finely executed effigy, remains ; and where those simple and touching lines, so different from the frigid classicalities of the modern epitaph, and which were engraven at his express command, may still be read.*

Upon the death of the Black Prince the former favourites returned to court ; the council appointed to watch over the king was reduced to a mere nullity, and John of Gaunt resumed his former sway. Of the real character and motives of this celebrated man, it is difficult to judge. That at one time he contemplated setting aside the heir to the crown, when his brother should have sunk into the grave, has been considered by many historians as probable ; but the fact of the Black Prince having appointed him one of his executors, seems to disprove this opinion ; still, that he aimed at the exclusive regency, appears not unlikely, and hence his brother's anxiety that a council should be appointed. The circum-

* Vide Appendix, No. 1.

stance of his having stood forward as the public advocate and patron of Wickliffe, while it has caused the monkish chroniclers (excepting Knyghton) to paint in strong colours the darker shades of his character, has induced too many modern writers to view him as an enlightened and devoted champion of the cause of religious reformation. Now there was much in the tenets and preaching of Wickliffe to gratify an ambitious man. The stern denunciations of the single-minded reformer against the pride and wealth of the English clergy, was "right pleasant doctrine" to the lord of the castle of Leicester, who saw spread out before him the rich and fertile lands of its ancient abbey, and who longed to make them his own; while the democratic views which Wickliffe, like other writers of his age, was never unwilling to advocate, must have found an echo in the inmost heart of a prince, who knew that a popular election would at once secure that crown, which hereditary right denied him. Thus, when Wickliffe was this year summoned to St. Paul's, to answer for his obnoxious tenets, he saw himself supported on each hand by Percy, the earl marshal of England, and by the powerful duke of Lancaster, who entered into the contest with all the bitterness of personal feeling, and, like a combatant pledged to fight "*à l'outrance*," flung down his gauntlet against the whole spiritual power of the land. But, while to Wickliffe's views of the unsecular character of the clergy, John of Gaunt lent willing aid, the doctrines of "justice, temperance, and judgment to come," found no welcome reception in his mind. The stern and self-

denying virtues of the reformer were distasteful to the paramour of Katherine Swinford, the proudest and most grasping of Edward's sons; and when, soon after, the prospect of the crown of Spain arose to his view, Wickliffe and his lessons were probably forgotten*.

Meanwhile the aged king sank rapidly; he was removed to Shene, where, neglected in his last moments by the woman who had constituted herself his sole guardian, and who is said to have actually stripped the rings from off his fingers when he became speechless, the unhappy monarch was left alone and dying. A friar who chanced to be passing near, heard the groans of the dying man, and he entered, and held up the cross. The forsaken monarch turned eagerly to the symbol of salvation, uttered the word "Jesus," attempted to kiss it, and, with tears rolling down his cheeks, expired.†

A gorgeous funeral testified the respect of the people for their illustrious monarch. Clothed in royal garments, with sceptre in hand, and face uncovered, the body was placed on a car, and borne in great pomp through the city of London, to West-

* It is but justice to John of Gaunt to remark, that although he ceased to be a disciple of Wickliffe, he never ceased to be a protector of those who continued so; and John of Northampton, the Wickliffite lord mayor, was indebted to him on one occasion for his life. John of Gaunt's will, which will be found in Nichols' "Noble and Royal Wills," affords a curious specimen of a mind ill at ease, labouring to obtain peace by superstitious observances. Ten large wax lights are bequeathed "for the ten commandments, which I have too often broken," seven for the seven deadly sins, and five "for my five senses, which I have most carelessly abused."

† The truth of this account, which is taken from Walsingham, has been sometimes called in question; but there is a confirmation of it in the valuable chronicle published in the 22d vol. of the *Archæologia*.

minster Abbey, followed by his children, his nobles and prelates, and a vast concourse of spectators ; where it was laid, according to her dying request, close beside the remains of Philippa of Hainault.

The coronation rejoicings swiftly succeeded to the pomps of the royal funeral ; and Richard, a beautiful boy of eleven years of age, now wore his grandfather's crown. His accession was hailed by the whole nation with a short-sighted joy, which succeeding events soon dispelled ; and his coronation was celebrated with a magnificence even unequalled by the splendid observances of his grandfather's reign. The young king, clad in white, came forth from the Tower, and rode solemnly through West-Chepe and Fleet-street to Westminster ; the earl marshal and the duke of Lancaster riding before him, Sir Simon Burley bearing the sword, and his palfrey, for which a sum almost equal to £3000 had been given, was led by Sir Nicholas Bond.

The pageants that welcomed him, and the splendid feasting, are minutely described by Walsingham, who records also the more important fact, that after Richard had taken the coronation oath, he turned himself to all sides of the church, " showing the oath to the people, and asking whether they would submit to him, when they replied by acclamation that they would." This act was probably intended, by the advisers of the crown, to afford an additional confirmation of the young king's claim to the throne, by shewing that to unquestioned hereditary right, the right derived from popular election, had been added.

The council of the young king soon found themselves involved in inextricable embarrassments. With the kingdom of England, Richard had received the ruinous legacy of that claim to the kingdom of France, which had, during the latter years of his grandfather's reign, drained the country so largely both of its blood and treasure. With France a warfare was still carried on, in which the inefficiency of the commanders, and the reverses of the troops, served only to aggravate the bitter recollections of the people; while in England, the unsettled state of the country, arising both from political and religious strife, demanded those wise and vigorous measures, which a council of regency, from its very constitution, is so seldom able to adopt. The serious grievances under which the country laboured are forcibly set forth in the petitions presented to Richard's second parliament. The people of Cornwall complain of the injuries they suffer from the French and Spanish fleets, which descend upon their coasts and do great damage; the inhabitants of Cheshire and Lancashire represent that the country round about is plundered and wasted by bands of armed men, who often carry off the daughters of persons of property, whom they forcibly marry to possess themselves of their portion; while those of the northern marches aver, that the Scots make continual inroads into England, burning and plundering, to the utter ruin of the English border.* To all these petitions the council, in the king's name, return conciliatory answers, but no real aid seems to

* Parl., Rolls, vol. iii., pp. 80, 81.

have been afforded. Emboldened by the weakness of the government, numerous pirates infested the Channel, and did great injury to the merchants, until John Philpot, a grocer, who in 1378 was lord mayor, hired at his own cost a thousand mariners, and fitted out armed vessels. These soon fell in with one Mercer, who had long been a terror to the northern coast of England, and after a severe conflict they took his whole fleet, consisting of "fifteen Spanish ships, laden with great riches," besides some vessels which he had captured off Scarborough.*

As early as the second year of Richard's reign, his council made proposals for his marriage with a daughter of the duke of Milan. The project, however, does not seem to have been proceeded with, and in the following year they entered into negotiations with Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia and emperor of Germany, for the marriage of his half sister, Anne, with their young king. The princess, who was chosen to wear the crown of England, was the daughter of Charles the Fourth, king of Bohemia and emperor of Germany, a monarch who was celebrated alike for his duplicity and avarice, but who was a man of superior talents. He succeeded to his hereditary kingdom of Bohemia upon the

* During the wars with France, the English merchant ships were exposed to great danger in their voyages; and as at this time the royal navy was not sufficiently numerous to allow of any being employed to protect the traders, we find that vessels lying at any foreign harbour, were accustomed to choose one of their number, mostly the largest, to be "admiral;" and thereupon the masters and mariners of the other ships were sworn before the chief magistrate of the town, "*selonc l'auncien custume de tut tems la usée*," not to quit their leader until their arrival in England, but to give aid in case of danger. Vide *Frost's History of Kingston-upon-Hull*.

death of his chivalrous father John, whose knightly spirit would not allow him to be absent from the battle of Cressy, at which, although blind, he battled bravely, and where he found a grave. In 1347 Charles was elected emperor, and from that time to his death, he steadily pursued the aggrandisement of his house. He is chiefly known by having obtained the "Golden Bull," so called from the seal being of gold, which definitively fixed the numbers and prerogatives of the electors; and he is said to have also purchased from them, at 100,000 florins a vote, the nomination of his eldest son to the empire. In 1378 Charles died, and was succeeded, both as emperor and king, by his eldest son Wenceslaus, the son of his third wife, while Anne was the daughter of the fourth wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Bogislaus duke of Stettin.

With the age, or the early history of Anne of Bohemia, we are wholly unacquainted; but that she was rather older than her appointed husband seems probable, from the circumstance of her joining in the treaty in her own name, which she would scarcely have done unless she had been of age. The first notice of this marriage is in the *Fœdera*, where, in December 1380, a treaty between Wenceslaus, the emperor, and Richard, is entered into, appointing procurators to treat respecting the marriage of the king with the emperor's half sister, and which is followed by a letter of Anne, appointing procurators on her part. In the subsequent proceedings of the procurators, we find it stipulated that "she shall be crowned within a given time," and that "all other

things shall be arranged like as for other queens of England.”* According to Froissart, Sir Simon Burley, with the other procurators, went with great pomp to Brussels, where he met duke Wenceslaus of Brabant, the patron of Froissart and the uncle of Anne, who gave to him special letters approving the marriage, with which he proceeded to the emperor. Meanwhile the duke of Saxony, one of the procurators on the emperor’s side, proceeded to England, to inquire respecting the dower, and how it was to be settled on the queen. “Now this estate,” says Froissart, “is worth 25,000 nobles a year, for I, Froissart, the author of this history, during my youth, served the queen of good memory, the lady Philippa of Hainault, to whom I was secretary, and I then heard from many ladies, lords, and knights, who had received these rents, their amount.” The duke, it appears, was satisfied; and, having received valuable presents of jewels, departed. The letter of Anne, in which, “with deliberate mind, free will, and certain knowledge,” she accepts the young king, was soon after received, and preparations were made for the marriage; but, ere the summer closed, all proceedings were stayed by that tremendous insurrection of the lower classes, which has been popularly known by the name of Wat Tyler’s rising.

The popular account of this insurrection is, on the whole, tolerably correct; although the motives that led to it have been variously and, in most instances, incorrectly stated. From the most authentic accounts, it appears that there were three separate risings of

* *Fœdera*, vol. vii., pp. 280—282.

three distinct bodies of peasantry ; that at Fobbing, in Essex, under Jack Straw, a person whom Walsingham represents as having been a priest ; that at Gravesend, of which the leader is not named ; and that at Dartford, under Wat Tyler. The concert which seems to have subsisted among the leaders, although probably not among their followers, disproves the notion that a sudden insult could have been sufficient to have aroused the spirit of resistance, although it is not unlikely that this determined the time.*

It was in May that these three distinct bodies of rioters marched toward the metropolis ; and, without resistance on the part of the civic or the regal councillors, entered the city, and commenced their work of destruction. Still there were redeeming qualities displayed by this vast mass of rude, and, for the most part, ignorant men, which proved that they were actuated by higher principles than those that commonly impel a furious populace. Their rage was chiefly directed against those whom they considered as unfaithful counsellors of the king, or those dignified clergy who possessed alike great wealth and great secular power. Wickliffites they could not have been, for they beheaded that mild and tolerant primate Simon Sudbury, and “ hated, above all mortal men,” according to Knyghton, “ the pacific duke of Lancaster ;” and yet they could not have been attached to the high-church party, for wealthy churchmen were the objects of their especial vengeance. Nor were they a crew of lawless ruffians,

* Vide Appendix, No. ii.

who aimed at the overthrow of all government, that they might spoil and enrich themselves at will. Their behaviour toward the young king was always decorous, and the messages they received from him were always treated with respect;—even when their leader was struck dead at his feet, no hand, not even a hostile voice, was raised against him; while, in their scorn of plunder, they exhibited a striking contrast to the conduct of later rioters. They rushed to the magnificent palace of the Savoy, and rased it to the ground, because it belonged to the obnoxious duke of Lancaster; but, although the richest furniture, and a wardrobe that equalled that of the king himself, and the costliest jewels, and silver plate, which alone would more than have filled five large carts, were there, all was cast into the fire; and, when one of their number, dazzled at the unaccustomed sight of such immense wealth, secreted a beautiful silver cup in his bosom, they threw him and the cup into the fire, declaring that they were “vindicators of truth and justice, not thieves and plunderers.”*

In the other details of their violent proceedings, a certain feeling of justice, and even humanity, seems to have ruled this fierce multitude. They burnt the

* This is the testimony of Knyghton, who furiously abuses them, and he received his account from the keeper of the duke's wardrobe, who with difficulty escaped from the Savoy, and came to Leicester. He says that the only property belonging to the duke, which they could not leave untouched, was his store of *sweet* wines. The costly Tent and Malmsey of his Spanish vineyards were too tempting, and many of the insurgents lay drinking in the cellar, until the walls of the palace fell in and buried them. Gower, in his “*Vox Clamantis*,” speaks of the ferocity of these insurgents; but it is not as an eye-witness, for he tells us he fled away, and remained for some days in a wood.

splendid house of the Hospitallers at Clerkenwell, and beheaded the prior; but they did no injury to the nunnery close beside. There were more than fifty churches, parochial and conventual, in London, possessing store of plate and costly vestments, but not one was burnt or plundered; there was the wealthy hospital of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield, where were the very head-quarters of the insurgents; and yet, although for days they encamped before its doors, no hand was raised against an establishment founded for the relief of sickness and indigence. Indeed, if we even compare Froissart's exaggerated and very incorrect account of this rising, with his description of the horrible excesses committed nearly at the same time, by the "Jacques bonhommes" of France, we shall be struck at the order, discipline, and actual good feeling, of the mob of Wat Tyler.

While London was thus convulsed, various parts of the country witnessed similar risings. In Norfolk "the commons" collected in large numbers, and in warlike array; and it was only by the prompt exertions of Henry Spencer, the young and belligerent bishop of Norwich, that they were put down. A party in the midland counties proceeded towards Leicester, for the avowed purpose of destroying the hated Lancaster's noble castle of Leicester; and the seneschal of the castle prayed the abbot of the adjoining abbey, to allow the more valuable part of the stores to be placed beneath his protection. This the abbot, through great fear, refused; and the duchess, Constance, was forced to depart for Pontefract, to obtain a more secure asylum. But it was

in vain that she fled; rumours had preceded her that the king had encouraged the rising against the duke;—the castle was strong and important, and the seneschal refused to admit her, on plea of holding it for the king. Worn and weary, without being allowed to stop for rest or refreshment; “driven away from her own house,” the wife of John of Gaunt, the Infanta of Castile, was forced to journey on seven miles farther, after nightfall, to Knaresborough, “with wax-lights borne before her that she might discern the road.”*

The story how this formidable insurrection was put down, is too well known to be repeated.† The courage and promptitude of young Richard, proved him worthy of the name of Plantagenet, and excited hopes which unhappily were not realised. The insurgents, relying on the word of their king, returned quietly toward their homes; Richard, with chivalrous feeling, having strictly prohibited his adherents from following them to avenge their late excesses. A commission was shortly after appointed, by which the ringleaders were tried;‡ the charter extorted from the king at Blackheath was annulled by proclamation to the sheriffs; and for all the efforts of this vast body of rioters, the mischief they had done was the only result.

* Knyghton.

† It may, however, be remarked, that the popular story of the dagger having been added to the city arms, in consequence of sir William Walworth's supposed prowess, is an invention of later times. None of the contemporary writers mention it, and it is first to be found in the apocryphal pages of Hall.

‡ In the rolls of parliament the names of the ringleaders are inserted: the greater number belong to London, and are all of the lowest class, chiefly carpenters, tilers, and weavers.

This extensive insurrection having been entirely suppressed, the arrangements for the young king's marriage were proceeded with ; and toward the close of the year, the princess Anne, accompanied by the duke of Saxony, and a large company of knights and ladies, set out from Bohemia to her uncle's duchy of Brabant, and remained for some time at Brussels. Meanwhile an embassy, consisting of sir John Holland, the king's half-brother, sir John de Montacute, seneschal, and sir Simon Burley, chamberlain, set out "to receive the lady Anne reverentially at Calais." Anne, however, still continued with her uncle at Brussels, "for there were twelve large ships, well-armed, coasting between Calais and Holland," says Froissart, "and it was said that the king of France intended to carry her off." Her uncle, the duke of Brabant, therefore, sent ambassadors to remonstrate with him ; and at length, passports, allowing her to come to Calais, were obtained. Accompanied by a hundred spears, the lady Anne and her suite set out, and when she arrived at Gravelines, she was met by the earls of Devonshire and Salisbury, who, with five hundred spears and five hundred archers, escorted her to Calais, where the English embassy awaited her coming. Here she was formally resigned by the German commissioners ; and having embarked without delay, arrived at Dover, from whence she proceeded to Canterbury, whence the earl of Buckingham, the king's uncle, conducted her with great pomp to London.

The marriage of their young king seems to have been hailed with great delight by the citizens, and,

indeed, by the whole nation. Although a stranger, Anne had already given proof of her kind and merciful feeling in requesting the king to proclaim a general pardon to all implicated in the late insurrection, which had accordingly been done,* and they welcomed her with an enthusiasm which probably laid the foundation of that partiality which Anne of Bohemia appears always to have felt toward the city of London. On this occasion, the lord mayor and aldermen, and the livery companies, went out as far as Blackheath to meet her in solemn procession;† and pageants, unexampled in number and splendour, welcomed her entrance into the city. She proceeded to Westminster, where, on the 22d of January, 1382, she was married to Richard, and subsequently crowned by Courtney, archbishop of Canterbury.

Although, from the concurrent testimony of historians, Anne continued to the end of her short life a favourite of the people, there is reason to believe that by some of the king's nearest relations, and by many of the clergy, she was viewed with dislike, if not with enmity. The reason of this may probably be assigned to the religious principles which she is said

* Vide *Fœdera*, vol. vii. p. 3. A similar precept is issued February 14th, in which this act of grace is also said to be at the especial request of the queen.

† In the books of the Goldsmiths' company it is recorded, that on the Wednesday after the feast of Epiphany, the lord mayor, aldermen, and companies, were to ride to meet her, and "forasmuch as all the mysteries had it in charge that they should not have any vesture of other colour than red and black," the goldsmiths chose for their livery, on the red part of their dress, bars of silver and trefoils, and on the black part, "fine knots of gold and silk, and hats covered with red, and powdered with trefoils." They employed seven minstrels, and they had a pageant in Chepe, consisting of a castle, with three female figures. Their total expense was 35*l*.—Vide Herbert's *Livery Companies*, vol. ii. p. 217.

to have held. Soon after her arrival in England, Wickliffe, in vindicating his efforts, by means of his translation of the Bible, to spread the knowledge of the scriptures throughout all classes, triumphantly referred to the queen, as possessing the gospels "written in three languages, Bohemian (her native tongue), German, and Latin," and as diligently reading them; and he argued, that in rendering the scriptures available to all, he did but that which the queen herself approved. Whether Anne ever met that illustrious reformer, or to what extent she became acquainted with his works, it is impossible to ascertain; but that she was surrounded by many of his followers, and that some of them held high places in her court, is certain. The opinion that Joan, the princess-dowager, was a patroness, or, according to some, a disciple of Wickliffe, seems very probable, from the circumstance that some of the leaders of his party, lord Latimer, sir Lewis Clifford, and sir Richard Stury, together with three other of his adherents, holding offices in her household, are nominated in her will as executors. The supposition that the princess held these principles, derives additional probability, too, from the fact of the friendly feeling which she ever evinced toward John of Gaunt, a feeling which, in her circumstances, as mother of the prince whom he was plotting to set aside, it would be difficult to account for, save on the belief that she viewed him as the powerful supporter of her religious tenets, and therefore was unwilling to suspect him of duplicity. It was with this princess that Anne, according to Froissart, passed the first

months after her arrival in England; and we may well believe that, active and earnest in their endeavours to extend a purer faith, the adherents of Wickliffe, by whom she was surrounded, would not long allow their queen to remain in ignorance of him or his writings. An obscure hint of the unpopularity of Anne with the church party occurs in Walsingham under the following year. "During this summer (1383)," he says, "the king and queen, with their Bohemians, went about, visiting the various abbeys, but, which was lamentable, not to give, but to take away;" and he remarks, with much bitterness, that their stay for ten days at the abbey of St. Edmundsbury cost the convent eighty marks; a sum which would scarcely have been noted, had the king and queen been favourites. He also complains that "the queen's Bohemians" were always seeking after gifts; whether this complaint was well-founded or not, we, however, have no means of judging.

Meanwhile the young king seems to have laboured under great pecuniary embarrassments, and even in the year following his marriage, we find him pledging a large quantity of jewels to the mayor and aldermen of London. We also find that his demands of supplies from the parliament were met by complaints of extravagance and misgovernment, which not improbably were true; but when we find them in his seventh year petitioning against the payment of queen's-gold, "for oblations, or fines, or grants of the lands, persons, and marriages of his wards,"* and the king returning a negative, stating that it had always

* Prynn's *Aurum Regine*.

been done, and that he would not diminish his consort's revenue, we perceive a degree of hostility evinced against the queen, which seems to prove that she had personal enemies.

It was, indeed, unfortunate for Anne of Bohemia that circumstances had occurred, in reference to some of her household, which were well calculated to increase the hostility of the king's relations. In 1385, when Richard set out on his expedition to Scotland with Anne, who always accompanied him, during his stay at York, his half-brother, sir John Holland, attacked sir Ralph Stafford, the only son of lord Stafford, in the street, and killed him. According to Froissart and Knyghton, sir Ralph Stafford was a favourite of the queen, and was on his way to visit a Bohemian knight belonging to her household, and who was his intimate friend; when sir John Holland met him, and charged him with having been accessory to the death of one of his esquires, who had that afternoon been killed in an affray with sir Ralph Stafford's archers. This sir Ralph denied, when sir John Holland struck him violently with his dagger, and killed him on the spot. Lord Stafford, the afflicted father, immediately demanded justice, and Richard, declaring that his half-brother should pay the penalty of his crime, sent to take him prisoner. Sir John Holland, however, took sanctuary at Beverley, where he remained, until Richard, urged, it is said, by the entreaties of his dying mother, reluctantly granted him pardon. In this case, the very proper unwillingness of the young king to pass over the crime of his half-brother, was attributed to the

influence of the queen, and from henceforth sir John Holland and his friends joined the ranks of her enemies.

Another circumstance which occurred shortly after, increased this hostile feeling toward Anne. In her household, though occupying a very subordinate rank, was a young woman, a Bohemian, of great beauty, to whom the young earl of Oxford, the king's especial favourite, became passionately attached. This young nobleman had been married at the instance of the late king to his granddaughter, the daughter of Isabel, countess of Bedford; but now, according to Walsingham, with the connivance of her cousin, the king, he divorced her, and married the low-born Bohemian. This insult to the royal family excited, very naturally, their indignation; the king's youngest uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, beyond all the others, expressed his anger; and, not improbably, that systematic and persevering opposition, which from henceforth marked his conduct toward his nephew, had its origin in the indignant feelings of an uncle, who saw his niece, a Plantagenet, abandoned by a wayward young noble, who, nevertheless, still maintained the highest place in the king's favour. None of the monkish chroniclers charge Anne with having exercised any influence over either the king, or his favourite, in this disgraceful transaction; and it is not improbable that the marriage might have taken place even against her wishes; still, the mere fact of a female attached to her household having become the wife of the monarch's chief favourite, was sufficient to increase the hostility of the king's relations.*

* Whatever anger might have been felt by the countess of Oxford's relations, the lady herself certainly seems to have exhibited little. She was

Meanwhile, succeeding events, while they made way for the departure of the powerful, and probably dreaded, John of Gaunt from England, raised up a more able, a more turbulent, and a far more dangerous opponent to the young king, in the person of his uncle, Thomas of Woodstock. At Easter, 1386, John of Gaunt, with his duchess Constance, departed to prosecute their claim to her hereditary dominions. On taking leave of the king at Westminster, John of Gaunt was complimented with the title of king of Spain, and he received from the hands of Richard a crown of gold, while Anne presented another to the duchess. Soon after the parliament met, and in the appointment of nine lords to inquire into the state of the king's household, and to reform what was amiss, we perceive the first step toward the dismissal of the household, and the formation of a regency, which, from his first entrance upon public affairs, Thomas of Woodstock seems to have aimed at. In the following session, the first petition in the English language was presented to parliament. It is from the Mercers' Company, and is addressed "To the most noble and worthiest lordes, and most ryghtful and wysest counseile, to our lige lorde the kyng, compleynen, yf it lyke yow, the folke of the Mercerye of London," and containing charges against sir Nicholas Brembre, the lord mayor, of having, notwithstanding that "the elecion of mairalte was to be to the free men of the citee, bi gode and paisable avys, of the wysest and

not only on very friendly terms with Richard during the later years of his reign, but subsequent to his dethronement she was charged with still maintaining his right, and causing "certain harts of gold and silver (his badge) to be distributed among her friends."

trewest, at o day in the year, freliche," he "thoro debate and stronger partye," had overawed the citizens, and procured his own re-election. A petition was also addressed to the king by the parliament, supplicating the removal of de la Pole, the king's other favourite. According to Knyghton, Richard was at his palace at Eltham when he received this petition, and with his usual waywardness replied, that he would not even remove a scullion from his kitchen at their request.* This intemperate speech produced the very effect to be expected. The commons took a higher tone; Thomas of Woodstock, now duke of Gloster, willingly undertook, with the bishop of Ely, to bear the message of defiance; and by their severe speeches and openly implied threats of dethronement, they forced the young and misguided king to meet his parliament, and witness the impeachment of his favourite, the chancellor. The parliament next demanded that a permanent council should be appointed; to this Richard was forced to assent, but he refused to extend its duration beyond a twelve-month; and fourteen nobles and prelates, among whom Gloster saw himself chief, were appointed. A parliament thus opposed to the king, was not likely to be liberal in supplies, and a proof of the great necessity to which he was reduced is found in an entry in the Exchequer Rolls, which states that the "great crown" was pledged to the mayor and commonalty of London for 4,000*l*.

The bondage in which the young king was now held, he found most galling. In the spring of 1387

* Knyghton, p. 2680.

he set out with Anne on a progress, ostensibly for pleasure, but, in reality, to take measures to emancipate himself from thralldom ; and he proceeded to Leicestershire, from thence to York and Coventry, and finally, as summer advanced, he took up his residence at Nottingham. It was the high season for the sports of the greenwood, when Richard arrived here ; and when we find in the Issue Roll an entry of "25*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* for a knife to be used in the woods; and a hunting-horn of gold, sixteen ounces weight, with tassels of green silk," we may well imagine that the council believed their young king but to be enjoying the sports of the season in Sherwood and Charnwood ;—but Richard had a far different object in view. On his arrival at Nottingham he summoned the judges, and inquired their opinion respecting the legality of that commission which had reduced him to a mere cipher, and he received the welcome answer, that the members might be indicted for treason.

Little heeding the constitutional correctness of a decision so gratifying to his feelings, Richard took prompt, but secret measures for the impeachment of the commissioners, and de la Pole having rejoined him, he, with his other favourite, de Vere, and the archbishop of York and the queen, returned in the autumn to London. Here they were met by sir Nicholas Brembre, and a large company of citizens, wearing the king's colours, red and white ; and having visited St. Paul's, where they heard divine service, the king and queen proceeded to Westminster.

Up to this moment Richard believed his plans had been kept secret from his enemies; he was thunder-struck therefore, when, on the following morning, he received intelligence, that his uncle Gloster, supported by the earls of Nottingham, Arundel, Derby, and Warwick, were advancing against him to London, with an army of forty thousand men. Ere he had recovered from his surprise he received a message from the insurgent lords, demanding an interview. This he dared not refuse, and on the following day, the "lords appellants," as they termed themselves, entered Westminster-hall, and flinging down their gauntlets, "appealed" the king's five favourite ministers, de Vere, de la Pole, the archbishop of York, sir Robert Tresilian, and sir Nicholas Brembre. Richard, unable to withstand so formidable a combination, answered them mildly, and agreed to the committal of all whom they professed to suspect. De Vere, de la Pole, and the archbishop of York, saved themselves by flying, but Brembre and Tresilian were eventually executed. The lords appellants withdrew towards the north, and Richard and Anne removed from Westminster to the Tower for greater security, there to keep their melancholy Christmas.

An unsuccessful attempt of de Vere to raise an army, again aroused the lords appellants. They marched to London, and two days after Christmas-day encamped in Clerkenwell fields, where sir Nicholas Exton, who was now lord mayor, with the aldermen, met them, and delivered up the keys of the city. They next demanded an interview

with the king, which Richard, unable to refuse, granted. According to Knyghton, he received them "royally, seated in a pavilion, bearing crown and sceptre;" but little heeding that empty show of royalty, the lords presented a list of names of those whose imprisonment they demanded. While Richard hesitated, the earl of Derby led him up to the wall of the Tower, and pointed to the crowd that surrounded it. Richard drew back in alarm. "Wherefore this?" said the duke of Gloucester, "here are not a tenth part of the people, who will join with us to exterminate these false traitors to the king and kingdom!" All opposition Richard saw was useless; he dissembled his real feelings, and again promised to perform their bidding.

The parliament met in February, when articles of impeachment were brought against the five ministers; and then four knights, who had been in the household of the Black Prince for many years, and to whom the young king was very naturally strongly attached, were put on their trial. The chief of these, sir Simon Burley, was one of the most illustrious knights of king Edward's reign: he had fought side by side with the Black Prince in all his wars, and had been constituted by him one of the guardians of Richard. At the young king's coronation he carried the sword before him; he was one of the princess dowager's executors, and had been appointed the chief procurator to bring over the queen. To him, therefore, both Richard and Anne were strongly attached, and it is probable that to this, and more especially to the queen's favour, he owed his downfall.

That throughout the progress of these proceedings great hostility was evinced against the queen, is proved by the parliament rolls, where, among the petitions to the king, is one, praying that the queen pay 10*l.* per diem for her expenses, "as the late queen was accustomed to do." This is followed by another, demanding that "the queen's Bohemians be sent out of the kingdom before the feast of St. John, and any remaining after, (except those allowed by the lords of the council to serve the queen) shall be placed without the king's protection;" while the seventh, and most direct article of the accusation brought against sir Simon Burley, is, that "from his influence over the king from his tender years, he counselled the said king to have in his household many aliens, Bohemians and others, and to give them great gifts."* When we find Thorn in his chronicle representing Burley as a bitter heretic, and Walsingham remarking that the queen's "Bohemians" were no friends to the church, it seems not unlikely that these subsequent proceedings against the queen and her friends, were founded on the encouragement given by them to those "new doctrines," which, according to Knyghton, were now spreading with singular rapidity through the land. This view will account for the earnestness with which the duke of Gloster insisted on the execution of sir Simon Burley; and it will also account for the eulogies which Walsingham, and other monkish historians, bestow on his conduct on this occasion.

It was in vain that Richard earnestly entreated his

* Rot. Parl, vol. iii. p. 242.

uncle to spare the life of his earliest friend ; it was equally in vain that Anne, on her knees, supplicated with many tears the same boon ; the duke of Gloster sternly replied, that if Richard would still be king, it must be done. Three weeks Richard continued his fruitless endeavours ; and at length, taking advantage of the absence of the king and those lords who supported him, the parliament proceeded to find sir Simon Burley guilty, on the apocryphal charge of endeavouring to compass the death of the lords commissioners ; and they issued an immediate order for his execution. Sir Simon Burley, with his brother in arms, sir John Beauchamp, was beheaded on Tower Hill ; his body was conveyed to St. Paul's, where a noble monument was placed over him, inscribed with an epitaph, which bade the reader look in the pages of Froissart and the history of England, for the record of his many valiant deeds.* The duke of Gloster was now lord paramount ; every friend, every favourite attendant, of the king and queen was executed, or removed from their society ; the former ministers were in exile, the lords commissioners resumed their rule, and Richard having, by their direction, appointed a commission to inquire into the spread of the Wickliffe doctrines, and taken for the second time the coronation oath, the parliament, after a session of unexampled duration, was dissolved.

Most of our historians have drawn a parallel be-

* "*Si plura velis Froissardum et Angliæ historiam consulas.*" The monument and inscription may be seen in Dugdale's St. Paul's. One of the first acts of the parliament of Henry the Fourth, was to reverse the sentence, and restore his nephew to his estates ; an additional proof that Burley fell a sacrifice to private revenge.

tween Richard, at this period of his reign, and Edward the Second, but surely, except in the general outline of their conduct, little resemblance can be traced. Both, were indeed, inclined to arbitrary measures, and both needed to be taught their duty by stern but wholesome controul. Still, it should be remembered that Edward ascended the throne at the mature age of twenty-four, Richard when a child of eleven. Both, were indeed, attached to favourites; but Richard set not at defiance the solemn warnings of a dying father, nor the remonstrances of his wisest counsellors, for of his three chief favourites, two were his father's old and honoured friends, and the third, de Vere, was high in favour with his grandfather, who bestowed the hand of his eldest daughter's child upon him. Nor could any objection be raised against the favourites of Richard on the score of unsuitableness of rank. Michael de la Pole, was the son of that princely merchant of Hull, who so nobly and liberally assisted Edward in his wars with France. He himself was an illustrious knight, and companion in arms with the Black Prince. At the accession of Richard he held the high office of admiral of the northern fleet, and although we cannot precisely ascertain his age, still, that he was past the middle age at this time, is certain.* The high standing and high character of sir Simon Burley, have just before been noticed; while, however censurable the extravagant habits, and overbearing conduct of the youngest of Richard's favourites, de Vere, might have

* *Vide* Dugdale's Baronage, where he is proved to have been born previously to 1336.

been, still, the representative of one of the most ancient English families, the earl of Oxford, could scarcely be considered an unsuitable companion in point of birth, even for a Plantagenet.

His oldest and most attached friends were now all removed by death or exile; and Richard, with the natural feelings of a high-spirited but deeply injured young man, seems to have given way, for some length of time, to uncontrollable sorrow. But there was still one left, whom he valued more than all: of her his bitterest enemies could not deprive him; and to Anne he now turned for that consolation and advice which, during the few remaining years of her life, both himself and the land found so beneficial. During the summer they remained at Eltham, and there probably awaited with confident, but patient expectation, that re-action of public opinion which might, ere long, enable him to break the yoke of his council. In the course of a few months, the hostile feelings which had been so studiously excited against their young king subsided; and the people began to murmur against the policy that rendered the successor of the third Edward, the sole surviving child of their idol the Black Prince, a mere crowned puppet in the hands of an ambitious oligarchy. But, taught a lesson of caution by his late misfortunes, Richard made no effort to regain his power, until the twelve months to which he had pledged himself had expired, and the parliament met.

On the 3rd of May Richard entered the council chamber, and sitting down, enquired his age. "Twenty-one," was the reply. "Then my lords,"

said he, "I am of full age to govern my house and family, and also my kingdom. I have been longer under controul than any ward in my kingdom. I thank you, therefore, for your services, but need them no longer." Struck with this dignified address, the council were silent; and Richard, apparently determined to follow up his plan ere they should recover from their surprise, demanded the great seal from the archbishop of York, and taking it, he placed it in his bosom and quitted the room. He soon returned, and then, according to Knyghton, gave the seal to the venerable Wykeham, bishop of Winchester.*

Richard now proceeded to remodel his council; and surely no slight praise is due to that wise self-denial which kept him, although still warmly attached to his banished favourites, from irritating the popular feeling by seeking to recall them. The proclamation, on his resumption of the regal authority, dated the 8th of May, is a remarkably temperate and conciliatory document. It states that, "willing to do justice and full right unto all and every of our liege subjects, we have resumed the whole rule, and full government of our aforesaid kingdom into our own hands; undoubtedly hoping, and with God for our helper firmly determining, to rule better, more happily and prosperously, to the honour of God, and greater peace and quiet of our people."†

Nor were these declarations mere formal words.

* In *Fœdera*, vol. vii., p. 616, is a curiously minute entry relative to this transaction, describing the room in which it took place as the chamber named "Marcoll."

† *Fœdera*, vol. vii., p. 618.

From the period of Richard's restoration to power, until the death of Anne, his government is allowed by every historian to have been wise and liberal. The parliamentary records of the first session alone, afford strong proofs of the attention which he paid to the welfare of the country. There are enactments respecting the wool and the wine trade, many relating generally to commerce, and in this session an act, equalising weights and measures throughout all England, was also passed. In imitation of his illustrious grandfather, Richard was always accessible to his subjects; and on one occasion so anxious was he to conciliate them, that he caused his chancellor and treasurer to resign, and then invited whoever might feel aggrieved to bring his accusations. The commons declared themselves perfectly satisfied, and the king then reinstated them in their offices. Nor did Richard evince any revengeful feelings towards his council; he promoted no measures against them, and after a dismissal of a few months, he even reinstated Gloster's name on the list of his counsellors. To his other relations his conduct was conciliatory. He created the duke of York's son duke of Rutland; conferred on his uncle of Lancaster the gratifying title of duke of Aquitaine; and on his return from Spain, Richard, in company with Anne and a numerous suite of nobles, spent some weeks at his castle of Leicester.

Meanwhile the influence of Anne, "that gracious lady," as the chronicle of London affectionately terms her, was widely felt; and although we may smile, when we read in Stow, who derives his infor-

mation from the monk of Evesham, a contemporary authority, that to her England was indebted for the "detestable fashions of long trains, peaked shoes, and horned head-dresses,"* we still perceive how powerful her influence must have been, to persuade Englishwomen, at this period so strongly attached to their national costume, to exchange it for the garb of a foreign land; and we may well believe that that influence, which was so irresistible in a mere point of dress, was not exerted in vain on more important subjects. The same authority, however, acknowledges that from her our countrywomen also derived that decided improvement, the side-saddle.

To the lover of our early poetry, the name of Anne of Bohemia should be dear, for in her Chaucer found not merely a patroness, but a firm and powerful friend; and to her encouragement we owe some of his most beautiful poems. As the friend of John of Gaunt, Chaucer was intimate with Richard from his childhood; and on the accession of the young king, he was sent to France to negotiate a marriage between him and one of the daughters of the king of France. In the negotiations respecting Richard's marriage with Anne, we do not find that he was employed; but his allegorical poem, "The Assembly of Foules," which has commonly been considered to refer to the marriage of John of Gaunt with the lady Blanche,†

* These horned head dresses excited the wrath of many a monkish writer. Some considered them to betoken the spread of Lollardism,—not improbably from their connexion with the queen, who was always suspected of patronising those opinions; and Lydgate has celebrated them in one of his most prosing ballads, in which he prays his countrywomen to "caste theyr hornys aside."

† Godwin in his life of Chaucer remarks, that the female eagle in this poem defers her marriage a twelvemonth, and that so did the lady

was most probably written to celebrate that of Richard. The eagle, the emblem under which the heroine of the poem is celebrated, was a bird almost unknown to English heraldry, but it was the especial armorial bearing of Anne, as "daughter of Cæsar;" and the peculiar gentleness, which is rather uncharacteristically assigned to this royal bird in the poem, seems to refer the allegory to some lady remarkably distinguished by sweetness of disposition; and this we learn from every chronicler was the characteristic of Anne. In 1382 Chaucer received his second public appointment of comptroller of the lesser customs of the port of London; but in 1384 he was involved in the disturbances of John of Northampton's mayoralty, and fled to Holland. Two years after he returned, and was committed to the Tower, where he remained until 1388. The circumstances under which Chaucer fell into disgrace, were well calculated to interest the queen in his favour. He had been the supporter of the Wickliffite lord mayor, and was suspected of holding similar opinions: thus, in addition to the interest she might feel in the fate of the first poet of the day, there was the stronger interest, arising from identity of religious principle. To her Chaucer addressed himself, and we find that to her earnest intercession he owed his

Blanche. On reference to the documents relating to Anne's marriage in the *Fœdera*, we shall find that exactly a year intervened between the earlier negotiations, and her setting out for England. The eagle too, whom she chooses as her mate, is described as "the fowle royal above you al in degre;" a phrase which, even allowing for the obscurity of allegory, evidently points out a monarch, rather than a mere prince of the blood royal. The eagle we also find was engraved on most of Anne's plate; and an eagle, with a leopard, are placed at the foot of her tomb.

liberation; and immediately upon Richard's re-assumption of power, he was appointed clerk of the royal works.

From henceforth Chaucer pledged himself to the exclusive service of his "lady sovereign," whom, under the emblem of the daisy, "The empress, and the floure of floure's al," he hymned in the sweetest numbers; and the earnestness and sincerity of his gratitude is painted in the lines,* where he addresses her—

"Who is the clereness and the veray lighte
That in this derké world me wins and ledeth.
The herte within my sorrowful brest you dredeth,
And loveth so sore, that ye ben verily
The maistress of my wit, and nothing I;
My worde, my workes so knit are in your bonde,
That, as an harpe obeyeth to the honde
That makes it soun after his fingering,—
Right so mowe ye, out of mine herté bring
Such voice, right as ye list to laugh or plain.
Be ye my guide, my lady sovereign;—
As to mine earthly God to you I call,
Both in this worke, as in my sorowes all."

And to the inspiration of "this noble quene, so womanly, so benigne, and so meke," we owe not merely the "Legend of Gode Women,"† which has always been represented as written at her suggestion,

* Vide the prologue to "The Legend of Gode Women."

† The prologue to this poem is very graceful, and in the pleadings of the queen of the daisy we have probably a transcript of the pleadings of Anne for the restoration of her poet to favour; while his enthusiastic description of her beauty and excellence have every appearance of the most perfect sincerity. This queen of the daisy, Chaucer always represents as being dressed in white. From some entries in the inventory of jewels and plate belonging to Richard and Anne, we find that white was her "livery;" we also find several entries of broaches and chaplets, enameled with "small white flowers;" and one cup is described as of green enamel, "powdered with daisies;" a gold bracelet, with "two ladies in white enamel, holding a flower in their hands," reminds us of the "Flower and the Leaf," and the various "chaplets," chiefly composed of pearls, also bring to mind the "white ycrowned queen."—*Vide Ancient Kalendars*, vol. iii., p. 331,

but "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," who agree to refer their contest to a "parliament," which should meet

"Under a maple, that is fair and grene,
Before the chambre window of the quene,
At Woodstock."

And that sweetest of all his poems, "The Flour and the Lefe," where the worshippers of the fading flower, who only sought "to hunte, to hawke, and play in meads," are contrasted with that fair company who, with the queen of the daisy at their head, seek higher and more abiding pleasures;—a graceful allegory, and most appropriately addressed to one, whose funeral eulogy recorded her diligent and conscientious occupation of time.

The rapid diffusion of the doctrines of Wickliffe, may probably be also traced to the same powerful influence. While, during the year that Richard was under the controul of his council, an act was passed for inquiring into the progress of these obnoxious doctrines, evidently with a view to their suppression; and although immediately after the death of Anne severe laws were passed against their supporters; during the whole period from 1389 to 1395, while, according to the testimony of every contemporary writer, those doctrines were spreading with unexampled rapidity, no effort on the part of the king was made to suppress them. On the contrary, sir Lewis Clifford, one of the warmest supporters of Wickliffe, held place in his household; and sir Richard Stury, also one of the earliest adherents and boldest advocates of these doctrines, was appointed

upon the council, and on more than one occasion was sent on important missions ;* while John of Northampton, who had been sentenced to ruinous fine and perpetual imprisonment, for lollardism, received, at the instance of the queen and the duke of Lancaster, a full pardon. It strongly marks the admirable mixture of gentleness and prudence which on all occasions seems to have characterised the conduct of Anne of Bohemia, that although recognised as the protectress of a sect so bitterly hated by the monkish writers, no hostility is expressed by any one of them against her ; and it is only from the absence of all panegyric, that we are led to suspect the cause. Nor was her prudence less conspicuous in her conduct as queen. The wife of a youthful and splendour-loving monarch, Anne was ever ready to preside at the royal feast, to take part in customary festivals, to join the procession, to present the prize at the tournament, and thus, by gentle courtesy, to win alike from high and low that attachment, which her nobler qualities might have asked in vain.

It was probably to celebrate his emancipation from the controul of his council that Richard, in the following spring, caused proclamation to be made throughout England, Scotland, Flanders, France, and Germany, that a tournament would be held in Smithfield, at the ensuing feast of St. Michael ; and

* That Stury held his place through the influence of the queen, derives additional probability from the circumstance, that the very year after her death he was called to account for his religious opinions, and, according to Walsingham, threatened by the king (but more probably by his council), with expulsion from the household. It may be here remarked, that the often contested question, the meaning of the name " Lollard," is set at rest by Dr. Dunham, who derives it from a German word, signifying psalm-singing.

the account of this splendid festival has furnished an interesting chapter in Froissart's graphic and picturesque history. On the appointed day, at two o'clock, sixty knights, richly clad in tilting armour, set out from the Tower, and proceeded through Cheap to Smithfield, where the queen and the ladies of her court sat as umpires, and there this gallant company "tilted courteously, with blunted lances, against all comers," for a rich gold crown and a gold clasp, to be awarded at the judgment of the ladies. On the following day the esquires tilted; and at three o'clock, sixty esquires, each on a barded war-steed, advanced at a foot pace. Then sixty ladies, richly dressed, each riding on her palfrey, followed, each leading a knight, completely armed for the tournament, by a silver chain. This gay and picturesque procession, attended by heralds and minstrelsy, proceeded along West-cheap to Smithfield, when each lady relinquishing her captive knight, was lifted from her palfrey by her attendant page, and led to the seat prepared for her. On this occasion the prizes were a war-steed, fully equipped, and a falcon; and with allowable pride, Froissart remarks, that the first prize, with unanimous consent of the ladies, was presented by the queen to his countryman, the count d'Ostrevant. Three days the tournament continued, and then, on the Thursday, the king gave a splendid supper; on Friday the duke of Lancaster made a dinner, and on Saturday the court, accompanied by the foreign knights, adjourned to Windsor, where festivities were continued during the whole of the following week.

The monk of Evesham relates that, "the white hart chained and ducally gorged or," that favourite badge of Richard, was first adopted by him at this tournament. According to an ancient French writer, Juvenal des Ursins, this badge was also adopted by the king of France about the same time, from the circumstance of his having captured a white hart in the forest of Senlis, bearing a collar of copper gilt, with the inscription "*Cæsar hoc mihi donavit;*" and it has therefore been thought that Richard adopted the lately chosen badge of the French king for the same reason that his grandfather assumed the *fleur-de-lis*. It seems, however, far more likely that the white hart was assumed in honour of Anne, whose father, as emperor of Germany, bore the title of Cæsar, and who is said to have discovered the baths of Baden-Baden, from the accident of a stag pursued by him, falling in. The most favourite of king Richard's badges did this become; and when deposed and imprisoned, the nobles, who still maintained his cause, urged on their adherents to attempt his rescue, by the figure of the royal white hart, chained and manacled, by the aspiring Bolingbroke.

The following four years were probably the most happy of any in this unfortunate monarch's short, but turbulent life; for, with the single exception of a violent contest with the citizens of London, nothing occurred to interrupt the tranquillity of the land. The origin of this contest, which took place in the spring of 1392, has been variously stated. According to Walsingham, it arose from the citizens refusing to lend the king a thousand pounds; while Fabyan

assigns it to a violent quarrel which broke out between the citizens and the servants of the bishop of Salisbury. Whatever was the immediate cause, and unfortunately the legal documents remaining afford no specific information, the king's anger increased to so great a height, that he seized the city charters, imprisoned the mayor, John Hynde, and the sheriffs, together with several of the chief men, and removed the law-courts from London to York. In this emergency the citizens applied to the queen, but whether her efforts were opposed by the council, or whether the king, from some unknown cause, continued implacable, peace was not restored until near the close of the year, when at length, through the unremitting exertions of "the gode quene Anne," according to Fabyan, "they were put into gode comfort;" and the king having promised once more to visit the city, the richest gifts, and the most elaborate and expensive pageants, were provided to welcome his entry. In a recent publication of the "Camden Society,"* we have a full and curious account of these, and a description of the whole ceremony from the time when the lord mayor and the city companies met the king and queen in Southwark, to the conclusion, when he knelt before the royal footstool at Westminster, and received confirmation of the city charters.

At the foot of the bridge, the lord mayor, addressing the queen, thanked her for her kind efforts, and

* "*De Concordia inter Ric. II. et civitatem London,*" by Richard de Maydiston. The writer was a Carmelite, and appears to have been one of the court chaplains. The scanty praise awarded to Anne, and especially the aspiration that she might become worthy of her namesake, "*Anna sibi nomen, re sit et Anna precor,*" strongly corroborate the opinion that she was suspected of holding Wickliffite principles.

presented a rich crown ; then two war-steeds, richly trapped, were offered to the king, and a beautiful palfrey to the queen. The procession then proceeded along the tapestried streets until it arrived at the conduit in Westchepe, which poured forth streams of red wine, while a fair maiden, standing above, scattered flowers and gold leaf. At the Cross, in Westchepe, an angel stood, bearing two rich crowns, which he placed with appropriate compliments on the heads of Richard and Anne as they passed beneath. At the east gate of St. Paul's, a pageant, elaborate enough to have graced the age of Elizabeth, appeared. Three ranges of seats, representing "celestial thrones," were filled with saints, and angels, and white-robed virgins, placed "in order due," all singing, and accompanied by a large band of music. Here the king and queen alighted, and entered St. Paul's, where they heard the service ; on quitting the church they were a third time presented with gifts,—these were two golden tablets, of great value, set with gems ; that given to the king, representing the crucifixion, while the queen's was a picture of St. Anne, in allusion to her name. The royal procession now took the road to Westminster, passing along Fleet-street, where at Temple Bar, a curious representation of a desert, filled with all manner of trees, and shrubs, and all manner of beasts, formed the appropriate platform for the representation of St. John and the Holy Lamb. Arrived at the palace of Westminster, the king took his place on the dais, and at the especial request of Anne, restored the city authorities to his full favour. The proclamations relating

to this affair in the *Fœdera* are dated the 19th of September, and specifically state that pardon was granted "of our especial grace, and at the request of our dearest consort, the queen."

From this period we find no notice of Anne, with the exception of a precept in the *Fœdera* for the collection of her queen's-gold in Ireland, until her death. Her gentle influence, however, was still perceptible in the prudence of the king's conduct, and the general tranquillity and prosperity of the land. Happy indeed, had it been for Richard, had her life been longer spared to him.

According to Froissart, in the spring of 1394, Anne fell dangerously ill, and her disorder increasing rapidly, she deceased at Shene, during the feasts of Whitsuntide. The first official notice of her death we find in the *Fœdera*, dated June 10th, which summons the king's "very dear and faithful cousins" to the funeral of "our most dearly loved companion, the queen, who is departed to God," and which fixes it for the third of August; "for her obsequies were performed at leisure," says Froissart, "as the king willed they should be magnificently done;" and we learn from the monk of Evesham, that the third of August was appointed, because it was the anniversary of her titular saint, Anne. The precepts in the various rolls during this interval bear ample testimony to the earnest efforts of the king, that her obsequies should be performed with unexampled magnificence. Fifteen hundred pounds of wax were purchased for tapers to burn about the hearse alone, and proportionable quantities were sent to the churches of Wandsworth,

St. Mary Overies, and St. Paul's, where the body rested on its way to Westminster. Special messengers were despatched to all the bishops, abbots, and friars, throughout the kingdom, requesting a funerary service to be performed in their respective churches ; and the whole nobility of the kingdom were summoned, on pain of the king's severe displeasure, to be present with their wives at the funeral. The story which Stow relates, that Richard, in the first paroxysm of grief at her death, caused the beautiful palace at Shene, where she died, to be pulled down, is, however, unfounded : since Froissart, who visited England the following year, expressly mentions Shene as one of the royal residences at which he sojourned. That Richard caused the apartment in which she died, and probably the whole suite of apartments usually occupied by her to be destroyed, seems quite consonant with his excessive grief, and the acknowledged impetuosity of his temper ; and if this were the case, it might easily give rise to the belief, that the whole building was demolished. At length, after two months' preparation, the corpse of the beautiful and gentle Anne was conveyed amid a blaze of torches and tapers, and, more grateful by far, the tears of the whole community, to the chapel of St. Edward in Westminster Abbey, where Arundel, subsequently archbishop, performed the service, and in a funeral eulogy pointed out to the attention and imitation of the hearers, the example of her "who, although queen, diligently studied the Holy Scriptures, and made them her daily meditation."

During the remainder of this year and the next,

Richard continued inconsolable, "nor was there any talk of the king's remarriage," says Froissart, "for he would not hear of it." This interval, during which he went to Ireland, was an opportunity too tempting to be passed over by the ambitious and crafty duke of Gloster; he resumed his sway in public affairs, and, favoured by the absence of the duke of Lancaster, who also became a widower about the same time with the king, he commenced a bitter warfare against the lollards, and by conciliating the higher clergy, seems to have aimed at again assuming the regency.

Meanwhile, overwhelmed with sorrow, it was not until full ten months after the death of Anne, that Richard recovered sufficient self-possession to make the requisite arrangements, even for that last token of affection, her tomb. In April, 1395, however, we find in the *Fœdera*, an indenture entered into with two stone-masons of London, Henry Yevely and Stephen Lote, for a tomb of fine marble, of the same height as that of Edward the Third, to be completed by Michaelmas, 1397, for the sum of 250*l.* to be paid by instalments. This indenture is followed by another, made with Nicholas Broker, and Godfrey Prest, citizens, and coppersmiths, to make "*two* images of copper and laten, gilded,—crowned, joining together their right hands, and holding sceptres in their left, with a ball and cross between them," and the one image to be made, "in the likeness of our lord the king, the other, in the likeness of the very excellent and very noble lady, the lady Anne, formerly queen of England." The effigies were to be placed on a plate of "*laten*," whereon fleur-de-lis

lions, eagles, and leopards, should be wrought; with two canopies, to be placed at the heads of the figures, two lions at the king's feet, and an eagle and leopard at those of the queen. These, together with twenty small brass images, and enamelled escutcheons to decorate the sides of the tomb, were all to be finished by the feast of St. Michael, 1397, and for them 400*l.* was to be paid.*

After this singular and touching expression of attachment to his deceased queen, which, as though he had no longer a mortal existence, placed the effigy of the living monarch on the tomb beside her he so dearly loved, the reader will be surprised to learn, that during the following summer, negociations were entered into for Richard's second marriage. But it was with no beautiful and accomplished woman, in whose society he might endeavour to forget his loss, that Richard sought alliance, but with Isabel, the eldest daughter of the king of France, a child who had but just completed her ninth year, and whose marriage was sought only for the aid so powerful a monarch as her father might afford to Richard in his projects of revenge. From the period of Anne's death, his vindictive feelings towards those who had so cruelly injured her, in the persons of those to whom she was most attached, and which probably were only suppressed by her gentle influence, now burst forth uncontrolled; and to bring them to punishment, he was ready to make every sacrifice,—even to place the crown which Anne had worn, on the brow of another.

* *Fœdera*, vol. vii. p. 795-97.

The arrangements for his second marriage were concluded in March, 1396, it being stipulated, that when Isabel had completed her twelfth year, she should be at liberty to give her final assent or refusal. In the autumn of the same year Richard, attended by a numerous suite, proceeded to Calais, from whence he set out to visit the king of France, "at a certain spot, fixed upon for their meeting." Here they dined, and, to borrow the words of Froissart, "at this dinner, when they were right merry, 'Bourbonnais,' said the French king, 'we wish that our daughter were older, even though we should double her portion, for then she would love our son of England much better.' 'Good father-in-law,' was the emphatic answer of Richard, 'the age of our wife pleases us right well; for we heed not her age so much as we value your love and that of your subjects, for we shall now be so strongly united, that no man in Christendom can hurt us.'" Some weeks were passed in a series of entertainments, in which the nobles of their respective courts sought to outvie each other in splendour, and then, early in January, 1397, in the church of St. Nicholas, at Calais, Richard received the hand of his baby bride, who was subsequently crowned at Westminster with great pomp, after which she retired to Eltham with the lady de Coucy, her governess, to whose care she was consigned during the whole period of her stay in England.

Secure of the alliance of the French king, Richard now proceeded with his plans of vengeance. Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick, were arrested on charges of treason, among which their cruel execu-

tion of that illustrious knight, for whom Anne on her knees had so earnestly, but so vainly, supplicated, sir Simon Burley, is specified with an emphasis which shows the deep impression it had made on the king. Arundel, subsequently the primate, brother to the earl of Arundel, was also accused with others, of having advised the execution of Burley and sir James Berners; and although he, and the earl of Warwick, were subsequently sentenced only to exile, the earl of Arundel was led to immediate execution,* and the duke of Gloster conveyed to Calais, where he shortly afterwards died under circumstances of great suspicion.

From this period the history of Richard belongs to that of England. He tasted the sweets of uncontrolled power, and the draught proved too intoxicating for his mind. The successful invasion of Bolingbroke was followed by deposition and captivity, and captivity by its seldom failing attendant, death.† At the beginning of the year 1400, rumours of plots to restore the deposed monarch, were mingled with

* According to Walsingham, Richard's determination to execute Arundel arose from his having offended him on the day of Anne's funeral, when, although bound in duty as earl marshal to attend her obsequies, he absented himself during the procession from St. Paul's to Westminster, and when, after great delay, he at length made his appearance, he "first of all asked permission to go away, because of certain pressing business." It seems difficult to ascertain what reason there could have been for this conduct, even according to the showing of his eulogist, save inflicting a gratuitous insult on the king.

† Upon the deposition of Richard, Charles the Seventh demanded back his daughter, and also her jewels, but Henry was unwilling to comply, as he wished to negotiate a marriage between her and his eldest son. The negotiations failed, and, after many delays, Isabel was sent back with her jewels, in August, 1401. She remained with her father until 1406, when she married her cousin, the count d'Angoulême, afterwards duke of Orleans, and died in 1409.

reports that he was no longer living. A council was summoned ; and they resolved, that if Richard were still alive he should be well guarded, but if dead, that he should be shown to the people. Within a few days, without explanation as to how he came by his death, the corpse of the unhappy monarch was exhibited, the face, from the eyes to the chin, alone uncovered, in St. Paul's, whither thousands flocked to behold it. But although so near, the body was not allowed to be conveyed the short distance to Westminster, that, as he so earnestly prayed in his will,* it might repose beside his queen, and beneath the tomb that already bore his effigy, but it was sent to Langley, and buried in the church of the Greyfriars. On the accession of Henry the Fifth, that chivalrous monarch, who in childhood had known and loved Richard, determined to fulfil his last request. In the first year of his reign he caused the body to be exhumed, and brought with every royal honour to Westminster, where, surrounded by banners which had just before decked the hearse of his more fortunate rival, it was placed beneath the tomb, so long before made ready ; and at length, after twenty years separation, the remains of the unhappy Richard and his beloved Anne mouldered side by side.

* Vide Nichols' Royal and Noble Wills.

THE EARLY ENGLISH POETS.

CHAPTER XXI.

Progress of the English Language—The Vision of Piers Ploughman—
The Confessio Amantis of Sir John Gower—Geoffrey Chaucer—His
Works—Thomas Occleve—John Lydgate—Concluding Remarks.

IN a former chapter we glanced at the first rude efforts of our infant language to obtain a station, if not among the refined and noble, at least among the people of the land ; in the present, we have to trace its slow but triumphant progress, until it lifted up its voice in the great council of the state, and the monarch himself asked the poet, “to boke some newe thyng,” in the *English* tongue;—to that period, when the language adopted by Gower and Chaucer, became the boast and the heritage of all who owned an English name.

It was not without a stern and protracted struggle that the ancient tongue of the people, eventually superseded that of Normand. During the thirteenth century, when the use of Latin in the law-courts was laid aside for that of French, a heavy blow was dealt against the still cherished language of the commons. Nor did that important step in our political history, the summoning of the third estate to the councils of the sovereign, aid in re-establishing the use of their “birthe-tongue” among the people ; for the proceedings of parliament were in French, and thus many

a burgess, but slightly acquainted with the language of the higher classes, was compelled to learn it, that he might exercise his new and important functions. The extension of commerce, too, was injurious to the diffusion of the native tongue in the mercantile towns, for the Norman French, although a different dialect from those of France proper and Aquitaine, was intelligible enough to those who spoke its kindred branches; while, more injurious than either, the exclusive patronage bestowed by Henry the Third and his court on Norman literature, cherished a host of poets, who, although English by birth, and English alike in taste and feeling, still persisted in using the language of Normandy.*

But the tongue that had survived more than two centuries, not indeed, of legal, but, more injurious by far, conventional proscription, now, when each year was adding to its copiousness, was not to be crushed. Exiled from the court, it still held its place in the folk-mote; scorned by the foreign dignitary who came from beyond the Alps, to batten on the rich spoils of the English church, it was cultivated and cherished by the Black-friar and Franciscan, and whether the popular leader sought to arouse his hearers to demand the "good old laws" of the Confessor, or the popular preacher to denounce the corruptions and arrogance of the clergy, the address was always made, and made triumphantly, in the native language of Englishmen. During the whole of the thirteenth century, too, an interest in English history, and a pride of English ancestry, had taken deep root among the nobles.

* Vide de la Rue sur les Trouvères.

Romance had invested England with a halo of visionary splendour, and while the monarch boasted that he swayed the sceptre of Brute and king Arthur, and each baron sought to link himself by apocryphal genealogies to the heroes of ancient England, feelings of respect for all that was English were unconsciously cherished. The loss of Normandy, too, was most beneficial; the noble, now surrounded by English vassals alone, became familiarised to that tongue which was sounding daily in his ears, while, during that long popular struggle which extended from the accession of Henry the Third to the deposition of Edward the Second, the nobles who took part with the commons, in their frequent communications with their adherents were compelled to make use of the popular language.

The effect of these beneficial influences, we begin to perceive, about the close of the thirteenth century, but especially with the commencement of the fourteenth century, when the fine romance of "Alysaundre," the spirited tale of "Yawaine and Gawaine," together with some other smaller compositions, prove that English poetry had at length found readers among the refined and educated classes. Still, as though to assert its popular origin, the first English composition which can strictly be viewed as a finished original poem, is the production of no courtly writer, seeking the applause of the great and noble, but the rude satire of Piers Ploughman, addressed to the commons, by one of their own number.

This singular poem, written in that peculiar alliterative metre which, wholly unknown to the Norman trou-

vères, was cultivated by the Saxons, is the composition of William Langland, a monk in the priory of Great Malvern, who completed it, (as Dr. Whitaker has verified by its political allusions,) about the year 1362. To lash the indolence, the luxury, and the worldly-mindedness of the clergy, more especially those of the mendicant orders, to denounce the general corruption of the age, the pride of the nobles, the rapacity of the mercantile classes, and to point out the sufferings of the lower orders, to the attention and sympathy of the higher ranks, are the objects of this singularly vigorous and graphic satire; and although the poem, from beginning to end, is allegorical, it would be difficult to find a work equally long and varied, whose *human* characters exhibit that verisimilitude to human nature which the shadowy company of Piers Ploughman presents.

This valuable poem, valuable from its pictures of manners to the historian and antiquary, as well as for its intrinsic excellence, takes the form of a dream; a form which became very popular during this century, in consequence of the authors of the "*Roman de la Rose*" having adopted the same vehicle, to convey their grave dissertations and their lively stories. Unlike that celebrated poem, Piers Ploughman tells us no naïve and pleasant stories, nor do amorous knights and captive maidens, fierce rivals, or stern castellans, ever appear in his pages; but allegorical personages, descriptive of every vice and every folly,—of every abstract quality which the acuteness of the metaphysician could invoke, threaten, quarrel, exhort, lament, confess, and make speeches, throughout

twelve long books. But then, the poetical power, not of mere diction, but of vivifying energy, that has given a breathing actual life, to these dim abstractions is marvellous. We follow maiden Mede (bribery) in her journey to London, smile at the bland speeches she addresses to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, as though she were no mere personification, but an actual human being; and we contemplate Hunger, feeding the "pore folke," and compelling them to labour, as though we had witnessed the famine of 1361. Nor are these graphic effects produced by careful working up, or by any peculiar fascinations of style. The diction is rude, the illustrations, whenever they are introduced, which is seldom, most homely; but the life-giving power of the satirist triumphs over all. Envy, with his eyes askant, crying *mea culpa*, and in the same breath cursing his enemies; Covetousness, "beetle-browed, blubber-lipped, with two bleared eyes," his cheeks like "a leathern purse all rivelled for age," confessing his many sins, yet chuckling with unrestrainable joy at the remembrance of his successful knavery; Sloth, with closed eyes and gaping mouth, begging that he may sit down to be confessed, and falling asleep in the midst of his half finished shrift; and Gluttony, seduced on his road to church, by the potent smell of good ale and spices, drinking and rioting with the "rascaille" crew at the alewife's, all stand bodily before us.*

For scenes of graceful refinement and gentle beauty, Langland has no place in his stern satire; but pictures of strife and rage, of fraud and cunning, of anxious

* Vide Note 3 Appendix.

exertion, of disappointment, of remorse, he paints with the graphic force and spirit of Albert Durer. From the strong feeling which, on all occasions, he evinces for the lower orders, his intimate acquaintance with their habits and modes of life, no less than his knowledge of the minute details of domestic economy, and the actual sympathy which he expresses for those poor mothers who, with all their daily exertions, can scarcely procure more than milk and meal for their young children, who, as he pathetically says,—

“ Sufrene mucho hunger,
And woe, in wyntere tyme, wyth waking a nights
To rise to the reel, to rocke the cradel,—
Both to carde, and to kombe, or rushes to pille,”

it seems altogether unlikely that William Langland could have passed his life in the cloister. His sympathies are too intense, his political feelings too violent, for one who only from a distance, and from what he would consider the vantage ground of his convent, caught an occasional glimpse of actual life. He was, therefore, most probably a man who, after a long and active secular life, retired to Malvern, and there, concealed beneath the veil of allegory, delineated those scenes and those characters, with which he had been familiar in the world.

The belief that, in religious opinions, Langland was the precursor of Wickliffe has very generally prevailed. But, although he lashes with vigorous strokes the luxury, rapacity, and secularity of the dignified clergy, and heaps unsparing abuse on the mendicant orders, whose splendid churches and superior wealth, seem to be the chief reason of his anger, he never impugns any doctrine of the church, or hints, which

if a lollard, he surely would have done, the necessity of a purer discipline. But although certainly not a lollard in religious sentiments, in political views he goes fully along with the most violent of their number. The doctrine that the people are the source of political power, meets us again and again in his pages; while the quiet humour with which he tells the fable of the mice attempting to "bell the cat," and bids the reader make his own application, "for ich dare not," shows that, in the opinion of Piers Ploughman, even the chivalric splendour of Edward the Third's reign were inadequate to counterbalance those evils which he deemed inseparable from royalty. That this powerful work was influential in producing the rising of the peasantry in 1382, seems almost certain. Each grievance of which they so bitterly complained, each wrong for which they so importunately sought redress,—the injustice of the ecclesiastical courts, the undue pressure of taxes on the lower orders, the increasing exactions of their landlords, especially in the form of *rent*, that new, and to them, most galling annoyance, each are dwelt upon with a bitterness which makes the rude numbers of Piers Ploughman the very transcript of the feelings of that untutored multitude, who keenly felt their wrongs, but needed words to express them.

The complete antagonist in rank, education, and modes of thought, to Piers Ploughman, is the next poet who used our infant language as the vehicle of his thoughts, sir John Gower, the student of the Middle Temple, the gentleman retainer of the duke of Gloster, the poet whose works so charmed the

king himself, that it was by his express order that he wrote his "*Confessio Amantis*," that poem on which his fame as an English poet rests. The earliest productions of Gower were in the long accustomed language of the high-born, the Norman-French, and consisted of "Balades," addressed to his ladye-love, and distinguished by singular elegance of thought, and grace of diction. He also composed a long poem in French verse, entitled "*Speculum Meditantis*," a moral work, but of which no copy has hitherto been found, and a Latin poem, which forms a kind of metrical chronicle of the insurrection of the commons in 1382, entitled "*Vox Clamantis*." Copies of this work still exist in manuscript, and the reader may also find copious extracts in "Gough's History of Pleshy." But the poem which he undertook at the express request of the monarch, and which formed the delight of the knight and the lady for many generations, was the "*Confessio Amantis*," a long and rather tedious dialogue between a knight and a priest of Venus, who acts as confessor.

In its general form, although it is not represented as a dream, the "*Confessio Amantis*" bears some resemblance to the "*Roman de la Rose*." Like that widely celebrated poem, it consists of long dialogues on a great variety of subjects, intermixed with amusing and appropriate stories, and like it, the metre is octo-syllabic and graceful and flowing. But the vigour and spirit which the French work displays belong not to the English poem; and although many of the stories, more especially the shorter, are well told, still a certain prosiness pervades the whole. For this we should, perhaps, blame the character of the

work, not the author, for the genius of Gower was didactic, rather than dramatic; and it is very questionable whether the "*Confessio Amantis*" might ever have been composed, had it not been for the express command of king Richard, who, meeting the poet in his boat on the Thames, bade him

"Come into his barge,
And whanne I was wyth hym at large,
Amonges other thinges seyde,
He this charge upon me leyde,
And bade me do my businesse,
That to his high worthinesse
Some newe thinge I shulde boke."

And this work was the result. Still it is not surprising that the "*Confessio Amantis*" soon became popular, for the poet who first told to the English ear the stories of Dædalus, and Phaeton, and the tragic tale of Pyramus and Thisbe,—who first opened to the English reader the fountain of classic fable, conferred no slight boon upon his age. When to this praise is added, that of collecting from every source accessible to his enterprise, a store of tales hitherto unsung by trouvère or minstrel, we shall cease to wonder that even in the golden age of our poets, the age of Elizabeth, Gower still held high place in popular favour.

To the modern reader, the most interesting portions of this curious poem, are those in which he describes the knight's duteous service to his lady-love:—his attendance upon her to the chapel; his riding beside her, and leading her palfrey by the bridle, "if she list to riden out," while his eye is ever fixed upon her doings,—

"For what so she will, so will I,
When she wolde sit, I knele by,
And when she standeth, then I stand;
And when she taketh her work in hand,

Of weving or of embroiderie,—
Then can I not but muse and prie,
Upon her fingers long and small.*

And then how, if she be abroad, he plays with "her lyttel hounde," or with her "birdés in the cage," while in the true spirit of knightly courtesy, so gentle, and so kind is his bearing toward all her domestics, that,—

"There is none so little page,
Ne yet so sympul a chamberer,
That I ne make them al chere."

Still, pleasing and graceful as are these parts of the "*Confessio Amantis*," it is unfortunate for the fame of this venerable poet, that his beautiful "Balades," only a few of which have ever been printed, had not been written in English. These, while in their general character they strongly remind us of the best poems of Surrey and Sydney,—in the easy flow of their versification and their singularly graceful style, would bear comparison with any similar poems, French or English, of the sixteenth century.†

Of the personal history of sir John Gower, but little is known. He was one of the few poets whose works obtained the admiration and homage of his contemporaries, and who in his lifetime received that guerdon which so many poets only attain in after days. Adhering to the duke of Gloster's party, subsequently to the production of his "*Confessio Amantis*" he took part against Richard, and was, after his deposition, patronised by Henry the Fourth, himself a lover of literature; and he died at an advanced age, in or near London, and was buried in the church of St. Mary Overies, where his tomb still remains.

Contemporary with Gower, his equal in birth and

* Book iv. † Vide translations of three in Appendix No. 4.

education, and like him the companion of the high-born, but gifted with a far loftier genius, was Geoffrey Chaucer, the only poet of this period, whose popular fame has extended to the present day. The general opinion which places his birth about 1320, seems incorrect, and between 1334 and 1340 is probably the more correct date. He was a native of London, received a liberal education, and was early in life attached to the court of Edward the Third, where he became an intimate friend of John of Gaunt. The order of his poems cannot be well ascertained, but the "Court of Love," and his translation of the "Romance of the Rose," were among his earliest productions, and it seems to be agreed by all his biographers that his "Canterbury Tales," were his latest. It is upon this last and largest of his works that Chaucer's fame, with the general reader, entirely rests; and his merits and defects as a poet have been discussed, even by literary men, with as exclusive a reference to it, as though he had never composed another poem. Although this is to be lamented, it is not so greatly to be wondered at, when it is remembered that nearly all his other poems are allegorical; while the "Canterbury Tales" not merely present a series of narratives, but in them the habits, manners, and modes of thought of our ancestors, are painted in the most vivid colours. The strong dramatic character which pervades them too, has rendered them generally popular, while the versatility of genius which those tales display, which shines equally in the quiet humour of the tale of the juggling alchemist, in the strain of gentle moralizing which pervades the story of Custance; which assigns to the knight, so

appropriately, that spirited and highly finished tale of Palamon and Arcite, and to the young esquire, that wildly oriental story of the brazen steed, and the "virtuous ring and glass;"—and then, that simple and touching legend, so sweetly told by the lady prioress, and with such full assurance of faith, of the "little child," who evermore "would syng and crie, *O Alma Redemptoris*," that saintly legend, which contrasts so vividly with the stern force of that of the homely "pardonere;"—the three young ribalds, who scoffingly sought about for death, unconscious how soon they should find him under the fatal oak,—all, prove Chaucer to have been indeed a poet.

But interesting and admirable as are these tales, full justice cannot be done to the poetical character of Chaucer, unless we turn to his allegorical poems. Here, not merely do we find the most exquisite sketches of natural scenery, and the most graceful touches of true poetry, but a refinement both of thought and language, which can rarely be discovered in his other works. In his graceful prologue to the "Legende of Gode Women," he has told us how his mind, like the harp, obeyed the impulse communicated to it by his patroness; and each work which owed its origin to the influence of the gentle Blanche of Lancaster, and the pure-minded Anne of Bohemia, are instinct with their grace and refinement. Chaucer's Dream—"The Boke of the Dutchesse"—"The Complainte of the Black Knight"—"The Legende of Gode Women"—above all, that beautiful poem, whence Spenser probably derived the first idea of his matchless "Faerie Queen," the "Floure and

the Lefe," are poems which the strictest follower of Wickliffe might have written unblamed, and the most refined lady of Anne's court have read with delight. It is in these poems that Chaucer appears as the ardent worshipper of nature in all her forms, who,—

" When that the month of Maie,
Is comen, and I heare the foulés sing,
And that the flourés ginnen for to spring,"

goes forth into the pleasant woods, among the noble oaks,

" With branches broade laden with levés newe
That springen out, ayen the sunny shene,
Some very red, and some a glad light grene."

Or wanders beside the brook—

" The gravel gold, the water pure as glas,
The bankes round, the well environing,
And softe as velvet the young gras
That thereupon came lustily springing."†

Or kneeling in day-long homage upon the " softe, swete gras,"

" That was with flourés swete embrouded all,
For nothing els, and I shall not lie
But, for to look upon the daisie,
That well by reason men call it may,
The daisie, or els *the eye of day*.‡
The empress and the floure of flourés all."§

• The Floure and the Lefe. † Complaint of the Black Knight.

‡ From the circumstance of the daisy, under its French name, "*la Marguerite*," being frequently taken as their device by ladies bearing that name, many writers have sought about for some lady called Margaret, whom Chaucer might have celebrated, and it has been supposed that this was the countess of Pembroke, daughter to Edward III. Mr. Todd, however, shows that she died in 1370, long before these poems were written; and it may be remarked that Chaucer *never* alludes to the daisy as being a lady's name, but always as an emblem of sweetness and gentleness, and as being the flower consecrated to "the gode Alceste, whilom quene of Thrace," a character who, in her devotion to her husband, and the attachment of her people to her, the poet might well consider as appropriate to Anne of Bohemia.

§ Prologue to the *Legende of Gode Women*.

And there, too, he sees the graceful procession of the ladies, each with "a chapelet," and her, "whose heavenly-figured face so plesaunt was," with royal crown, and branch of agnus castus in her hand, who leads the fair company; while the goldfinch is "leping pretilie" among the thick boughs, and the nightingale,—

"with so mery a note
Answered him, that al the wodé ronge
So sodainly :—so was I with that songe
Thoroly ravished, that till late, and longe,
I ne wiste in what place I was, ne where."*

Until the "voices most delicious" of the fair company recall him to consciousness. Perhaps from the works of no poet, save Spenser and Wordsworth, could so large a selection of beautiful passages, descriptive of natural scenery, be made as from Chaucer. He revelled amid the "merry greenwood;" and here around this, so favoured spot, to the English poet, all his brightest fancies gathered. Each shady "pleasaunce," each upsparkling brooklet, each young flower that gemmed its margin, even each blade of "softe swete gras," is hymned by Chaucer with the same keen sense of the beautiful, with the same deep and intense devotion, as are his, who has so sweetly hailed the "little lowly celandine," and whose inmost heart "danceth with the daffodil." It is only in contemplating these almost forgotten poems, that we can adequately appreciate "the *riches* of Chaucer."

Great obscurity rests upon the latter years of Chaucer's life. After the death of his patroness, Richard settled on him an additional pension, and he continued in high favour with him. In the year

* Floure and the Leafe.

1398, at the period when the king was contemplating the most arbitrary measures, he was sent abroad "on the king's private affairs," a strong proof of the partiality with which Richard regarded the favourite poet of his queen,—a proof, too, of the incorrectness of the generally received date of Chaucer's birth; for, to the difficulties and fatigues of such a mission, a man of seventy-eight years old, would be necessarily incompetent. He survived the deposition of the unfortunate Richard, and received from Henry an annuity of forty marks: the annual donation of a pipe of wine, which he had formerly received from Richard, was also confirmed to him. We have no reason to believe that these favours were purchased by ingratitude to his former patron; but the son of John of Gaunt and the duchess Blanche,—himself a patron of literature, would naturally feel respect toward that poet, who, although the friend of Richard, had been the steadfast friend of his own father, and who had consecrated the first blossoms of his genius, to the praise of the beauty and gentleness of his mother. The year of Chaucer's death is uncertain; the last document respecting him bears the date of 1399; it is, therefore, most probable that he died soon after. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Nearly contemporary with Chaucer, and, as he tells us, his friend and disciple was Thomas Occleve, a poet whose works still remain in manuscript.* Nothing more is known of him, save that he was a lawyer, and in the office of the privy seal, and that his principal work, "*De Regimine Principis*," was

* They are in the Royal Library, 17. D. 6.

written for the instruction of Henry V., while prince of Wales. This work is curious, as giving the generally received views of kingly government in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and strongly corroborates the opinion which has been advanced in former chapters, of the prevalence of free principles under the Plantagenets. The duties of a monarch are set forth with a plainness and freedom, that would have irritated a Tudor, and excited the utmost rage of the sapient author of the "*Basilicon Doron*." To do justice, to be ever anxious to promote the well-being of the people, to listen to the complaint of every one, because, if the monarch possesses power, it is delegated to him only for the benefit of the community, are the duties which Occleve, expressly addressing the heir of the crown, presses on his attention, by the consideration that "thys worlde's joy is transitorie," and that

"Whoso liveth wel, well shall he dye.

"Like a bridel is death's remembraunce,
That manne's herte refrayneth fro vice;
That kyng that knyghtly is of governaunce,
That is to say, doth justly hys office,
Of love, of pees, of reste, that is norice;—
When that he is oute of this world ysent,
Thus say men that gon by his monument.

"In heven mote that kyng's soule yrest,
This worthy kyng! for that grete was the pees
That men hadde in hys tyme; he was the beste
That might be, he kepte hys peple harmeles,
And in hys comyng glad was al the pees,
And sorry al were at hys departyng:—
O! gracious prince, suche be your worthy endyng.

"Thus my gode lord, wynnethe the people's voice,
For people's voice is Godde's voice men sayn—
And He, that for us suffered on the croice,
Shall quit it you—O doubt it not, certeyn
Your labor shall not idle be,—in veyn
Ne gode dede is, nor unreward, unquit,
Ne evil punyshed not, as seyth al Holy Writ."

The following lines, in which Occleve impresses on his royal disciple, the importance of knightly prowess, doubtless found a willing echo in the heart of the future hero of Azincourt :—

“ O worthy prince, I trust in your manhode,
Modelled with prudence and discretion,
That ye shal make full many a knyghtly rode,
And the pride of our foemen thrust adoun.”

But still he must remember that it is “ knightly to be meke and *debonnaire*.” This Occleve illustrates by several pleasing and well told stories; for the story was always in those days called in to “ point the moral,” and also by the example of the lion, whose “ right royal” nature suffers him not to prey on the defenceless, and of the queen-bee, who, while all her subjects have stings, is herself stingless; but above all—

“ Mercie, Christ causéd to be incarnate,
And humbled hym to take our brotherhede,
God immortal, rewing our sicke estate,
Mortal became, to punish our sinful dede:
Hym lothed not Hys precious blode to shede
Upon the croice, the Lord benigne and goode,
He wrote our charter with hys owyne bloode.”

Then the monarch must be always ready to hear advice, and to be liberal, and to be most courteous to all, for that is “ knyghtly,” a word which, according to Occleve, and it is in the true spirit of chivalry, comprises every virtue.

The affection with which Occleve mentions Chaucer is highly creditable both to master and disciple; he characterises him as the “ fyrst fynder of our *faire language*,” an emphatic phrase, which shows how far better fitted for the purposes of verse the early poet found our noble language, than that which had

for so long superseded it; and he laments that he cannot express himself like his teacher—but

“ Alas! my fader, fro the worlde is gon.
My worthy maistre Chaucer, hym I mean—
Be thou advocate for hym hevenly quene!’
As thou wel knowest, blessed vergeyne,
Wyth loving herte, and hye devocion.
In thyne honour he wrote ful many a line.
O now’s thyne helpe and thy promotion,
Pray God thy son”

that the spirit of the departed poet may “floure and fructifie.” Yet more to show his grateful remembrance, he has caused a portrait of Chaucer to be inserted in the margin—

“ That they who have of hym lost thought and mynde,
By thys peinture may ageyn hym fynde.”

As a narrative poet Occleve displays much merit; his story of the father, who, fearful it would seem of the fate of king Lear, persuades his mercenary sons-in-law that he has a “stronge coffre” full of bezants, is told with much quiet humour; and that of “the emperice,” (for he does not give her a name) with a simple pathos, which fastens strongly on the reader’s sympathies. But, above all, the wild tale of Jonas, with his ring that procures the love of all men, the brooch that obtains for him all he wishes, and the carpet that carries him wherever he chooses, is told with an ease and spirit, which makes us not wonder at the high eulogy which William Browne, himself no mean poet, has pronounced on it in his Pastorals.

The last of the company of poets who adorned this period is John Lydgate, a monk of St. Edmund’s Abbey, at Bury, who flourished during the earlier half of the fifteenth century—the most voluminous

and the most versatile writer of all. His larger works are mostly translations. "The Story of Thebes,"—"The Fall of Princes,"—and "Troy Book," which he commenced at the express command of Henry the Fifth, in the last year of his father's reign, and completed in 1420. But in addition to these, he wrote a long and certainly not very poetic life of his patron St. Edmund, which is enshrined in one of the most beautifully illuminated manuscripts which the British Museum contains;* his "Testament," a religious work, and in which many passages of great merit may be found; a very curious and humorous poem, entitled "London Lyckpenny," which, with the minuteness of Chaucer, exhibits a picture of London and its inhabitants in the reign of Henry the Fourth;—besides "Balades royal," for coronations, feasts, pageants, and civic processions, without number. On two most important occasions his muse was invoked—to celebrate the victory of Azincourt, and the reconciliation of the duke of York with Henry, in 1458; but on both occasions his muse refused to obey the call, and each poem is complete doggrel. But Lydgate could sometimes write with the spirit and the feeling of a poet; and when he celebrates

"The larké's songe
With notes newe, high up in the aire;
And the glad morrow, rodie, and right faire,
And Phœbus also, casting up his beame,
The highe hills, ygilte with his streames,
And silver dew upon the herbés round,"

we perceive that he possesses a poetic feeling akin to Chaucer. There is an allegorical poem of Lyd-

* Harleian Coll. No. 2278.

gate's too, which has sometimes been attributed to Chaucer—"The Floure of Courtesy," which displays great facility of versification, and a grace and beauty which render it scarcely unworthy of that illustrious poet, whose name it so long bore. While in his "Balades," a name at this time used generally to signify small pieces of poetry, he is often diffuse and constrained, his religious poems are remarkable for condensation of style. Few writers, even of the present day, if trammelled by three constantly-recurring rhymes, could give a specimen of closer and easier versification than the following stanzas present. These are the part of the concluding address to St. Edmund, which ends his life of that king:—

"Be thou our swerde, al foreyn foon t' oppresse,
Our sheelde, our pavys, castel of suretye,
Our port-colys, our bolewark of stabylnesse,
Gate of defence to keopen the entré,
That none enemye may break our libertye;—
O gracious martir! have alway remembraunce,
To pray the Lord in the celestial se,
For th' enherytour of Engélonde and France.

Pray, that the churche may stande in parfitnesse,
Pray for prynces to kepe ther dignitie,
Vertuously, withouten doublynesse;
Pray for knyghthode to lyve lyk ther degré;—
Pray for the law, that none extorcion be,
And that the marchants hold justly the balance,
Pray for the plow, pray for al povertie,
And for th' enherytour of Engélonde and France.

Folke at debate, reconcile and redresse,
Reform discordys to pes and unyté;
Folke langwysing and bedrid for sykenesse
Send hasty comfort to ther infirmité;
Folke exiled restore to ther countré,
To prisoneres mercyful deliverance;—
And blessed Edmund in long prosperité,
Conserve th' enherytour of Engélonde and France."*

From the period when Lydgate flourished, until

* Harleian Coll. 2278. Many far better specimens might be given than this, but they are too long for insertion.

the days of Lord Surrey, an interval little short of a century, not one poet whose works are worthy preservation can be found; and yet, during all this time, the English language was enlarging its vocabulary, and daily becoming better fitted for poetical use. The disastrous wars of the Roses, we have been told, was the cause of this dearth of poetical genius, and with many writers this reason has appeared sufficient. But when has ever a state of public excitement been unfavourable to poetry? The mere versifier of the drawing-room, nourished amid all the artificial details of a sickly refinement, may indeed, like the frail exotic, require shelter and unceasing sunshine; but the real poet—he whose inspiration is caught amid the glad scenes of nature, or awakened spontaneously by the thousand hopes, and joys, and cares, which agitate the human heart, finds in the storm, no less than in the sunshine, his fitting element. The mighty genius of Dante struggled into life amid the fiercest strifes of civil war; the poets of the age of Elizabeth were cradle-rocked by the tempests of the Reformation; and Milton, after passing a life of stern conflict with the enemies of freedom, in his old age closed his eyes to dream of Paradise.

From whence, then, could this dearth of poetical talent arise? In the century on which we are now about to enter, there were influences abroad, mighty enough to have aroused the most sluggish mind, and scenes wild and stirring enough to have awakened the dullest imagination. There was all England, one vast battle-field; and the lofty Margaret, and

the meek and holy Henry, the wily York, and Warwick, that changer of dynasties, pressing on from conquest to conquest, until, like the doomed one of ancient story, his hour came;—every character of that eventful period was cast as for a lofty heroic drama; but yet no contemporary poet arose to give that drama an abiding form, not even to sing the triumphs of the Red or White Rose. While we may clearly trace the progress of civilization and refinement at a given period,—while we can, with a fair degree of accuracy, define the conditions on which the literary character of an age or a people depend,—the laws which regulate poetic genius, seem altogether beyond our research: at one period we behold a bright galaxy of poets, and again a long and starless night succeeds. Thus, viewed in reference to after times, these our first English poets, like the early singing birds, called into life and song by the sunny brightness of an unexpected spring-tide, made glad these early days, and then ceased. A long and songless interval succeeded; but still, like those early singing-birds, their pleasant though fleeting song gave sure promise of that rich and abundant melody which should at length fill wood and field.

JOAN OF NAVARRE.

CHAPTER XXII.

Her Parentage—Her first Marriage—Subsequent Events—Death of John the Valiant—Joan becomes Guardian of the Duchy of Bretagne—Treaty of Marriage between her and Henry the Fourth—Voyage to England—Her Marriage—Political State of England—Early Hostility evinced towards her—Tournament in Smithfield—The Collar of SS.—Henry's Death—Respectful Conduct of Henry the Fifth toward her—Joan charged with Conspiring against the King's Life—Probable Foundation of the Charge—Her Imprisonment—Her Release—Restitution of her Dower—Her Death.

So little attention has been paid to the history of the queens consorts, by English historians, that scarcely even the name of the queen, who gives the title to this chapter, is known to the majority of readers; indeed, but for the place which her beautiful effigy occupies on the tomb of her husband in Canterbury cathedral, few might be aware that Joan of Navarre ever had existence. And yet this almost forgotten queen was a descendant of two royal houses—wife, by her first marriage, to one of the most illustrious warriors of an age distinguished for martial enterprise; and herself, possessing commanding talents, was destined to act an important part, both in Bretagne and England.

Joan of Navarre was the youngest daughter of

that king who, from his repeated treacheries, is known in the annals of France by the emphatic title of Charles the Bad, and of Joan, the daughter of John king of France. With her early history, even with her exact age we are unacquainted, and the first notice we find of her is, that she was selected by her maternal uncles, the dukes of Burgundy and Berri, as the third wife of John the Fourth, duke of Bretagne, to obviate the disadvantages of an alliance with England.

John the Fourth, surnamed the Valiant, was the son of John de Montfort, and that heroine, whose fortunes have furnished Froissart with perhaps the most interesting chapters in his delightful history; he was the "little child" whom she held in her arms when she addressed the garrison at Rennes, with the encouraging words, "Sirs, be not so sorely cast down about the earl my lord, whom ye have lost; behold my little child, who shall be, by the grace of God, his restorer, and he shall advance you all." And well, in after years, did her "little son John" fulfil his mother's prophecy: he received his education in England, among the knights of king Edward, who bestowed on him the hand of his daughter Mary, and he took part in all the wars of that brilliant reign, and thence earned the title of the Valiant. On the death of Mary, he married Joan Holland, the half sister of King Richard; and, on her death, Joan of Navarre, with a large portion, was proposed to him by her uncles, who at this unsettled period were anxious to secure so important a fief as Bretagne to the crown of France. In June, 1384, Pierre de

Lesnerac was commissioned to apply for the hand of "the very powerful and very noble lady, my lady Joan;" and, after many delays, the marriage was celebrated in September 1386, at Saillé, near Guerande, in Navarre. The portion which the king of Navarre bestowed on his daughter was ample, 120,000 gold crowns, and an annual allowance of 6000 livres, charged upon lands belonging to him in Normandy; while John assigned to her, as dower, "one-third of our lordships, rights, lands, rents, &c. as by the common custom of our duchy."*

From the earliest days of her married life, Joan of Navarre seems to have enjoyed little domestic happiness. The duke, considerably older than herself, and still mourning the loss of his second wife, was probably little disposed to treat her with that attention which a young princess, separated from her country and friends, would desire; while the state of his duchy, now menaced with war by England, and the uncertainty of the hollow peace which he had concluded with his most powerful enemy, vassal though he were, Olivier de Clisson, constable of France, were sufficient to occupy his mind with the most anxious apprehensions. In the December of this year Joan received intelligence of the death of her father, under circumstances which, to the superstitious feelings of the age, were singularly appalling. As profligate in his private character as he was perfidious in his public relations, although scarcely passed the middle age, Charles the Bad was in the last stage of decrepitude, and in accordance with the

* Lobinau, Histoire de Bretagne.

fanciful medical practice of that day, he was accustomed every night to be wrapped in linen cloths, saturated with turpentine and a solution of gums. It happened that a young page, approaching too near with a lighted taper, let a spark fall on these inflammable coverings. The wretched monarch was instantly enveloped in flames, and ere they could be extinguished, was so miserably scorched, that he died in a few days, unpitied, even in such a death by the people, who viewed it as a direct judgment on him for his wickedness. Although it is very unlikely that Charles the Bad had conciliated the affection of his children, still so melancholy a death could not but have greatly affected his daughter; but with the commencement of the next year new troubles assailed her.

As the price of his new alliance, the duke declared war against England, and fitted out a fleet, which besieged Brest; but he was defeated with great loss; the English effected a landing in Bretagne, and the powerful constable of France, after a violent quarrel with the duke, which ended in his arrest, escaped, and proceeding to Paris, charged him with treason. In the midst of the anxieties consequent on these untoward circumstances, there was one event to which the duke looked forward with eager expectations. Childless by his two former marriages, the approaching confinement of Joan promised an heir to the ancient house of de Montfort, who would not merely form an additional bond between the duke and his subjects, but effectually preclude the next heir, who even now claimed the duchy, from again advancing

his claim. But sorrow was still to be the lot of Joan of Navarre ; the intelligence of the birth of a daughter was received by the duke with expressions of the utmost mortification ; and when he learnt that through the agency of De Clisson the next heir of the duchy had been released from his captivity in England, and, as the son-in-law of that powerful warrior, was about to renew his claim, his anger was uncontrollable. Still, although menaced on the one side by England, and on the other by France, whose supreme court threatened him with war, unless he immediately proceeded to plead his cause before the king, John the Valiant held out until, unable to withstand two such powerful enemies, he at length yielded, and set out for Paris.

Meanwhile Joan, who had become the mother of a second daughter, dwelt solitarily at the castle of Ermine, where, ere long, she had to mourn the death of both her children, who died toward the close of 1388, within a short time of each other. The sorrow of this unhappy young princess now seemed to have reached its height, but the news of the reconciliation of the duke with the king of France, and the birth of her eldest son on the 24th of December, made some compensation for her former sorrows. Up to this period Joan of Navarre seems to have possessed no influence in public affairs, but with her advancing years, and schooled probably by adversity, we find her beginning to exercise an influence which eventually qualified her for the government of the duchy. Notwithstanding their treaty, war soon broke out again between the duke

and de Clisson, and again the king of France summoned them both to appear before him. Again, John the Valiant refused, and the duke de Berri was sent to Nantes, whither he summoned the chief nobility of Bretagne, while ambassadors were sent to the duke. Irritated at this, John the Valiant gave orders to arrest the ambassadors, when, struck with the imminent danger to which so perfidious a step would expose the duchy, Joan instantly hastened with her young son and her second child, a little infant but lately born, in her arms, to the duke, and prayed him with many tears, not to expose those unconscious children to the dangers which would inevitably arise from so rash a step. Her earnest pleadings were successful, the duke revoked his order, and directed that the ambassadors should be treated with all customary respect.*

Again did the duke and de Clisson become friends, and again break their treaty; and thus they continued until the dastardly attempt, in 1392, of Pierre de Craon upon the life of the constable. Although John the Valiant might not be actually the inciter of his relation to this most disgraceful deed, still, that he furnished him a short time before with 10,000 gold francs, and after his ineffectual attempt allowed him to take refuge in Bretagne, are sufficient to excite suspicion that the duke was not altogether free from guilt. Again the indignation of the court of France was roused; a message was sent, commanding the delivery up of de Craon, and on the answer being sent that he was not in Bretagne, the

* Lobinau.

king formally declared war against his vassal, and summoned a large army to march directly upon the duchy.

The ruin of the duke now appeared inevitable, but he was saved by one of those unexpected turns of fortune which seem to belong rather to romance, than to authentic history. Charles had assembled a large army at Mans, and rejoiced at finding de Clisson already so perfectly recovered from his wounds as to be able to join his company, set forth in high spirits. The way lay across a wide plain, the sun was shining with great intensity, the king wore a very slight covering on his head, while one of his pages, who rode rather in advance, bore the burnished steel casque. Whether the rays reflected from the helmet injured the king's sight, or whether the intense heat affected his brain, cannot be ascertained; but, after riding some miles in silence, the attendants were aroused by the cries of the pages, and they beheld the king, sword in hand, attacking every one around him. His uncles were called, but they dared not approach; with great difficulty he was disarmed, and then it was discovered that Charles was raging mad! The expedition was forthwith abandoned, the king conveyed home in a litter, and John the Valiant was thus unexpectedly saved.

The continued incapacity of the king did not prevent de Clisson and the duke from carrying on a private war. In 1393, the duke besieged him so closely in his castle of Josselin, that the viscount Rohan was despatched to pray the duchess to exert her influence with the duke to raise the siege.

Towards de Clisson she always had been more favourable than her husband ; she therefore exerted herself most willingly, and obtained her request ; de Clisson agreeing to return to his allegiance, and pay the sum of 100,000 gold francs. His confederates likewise prayed Joan's mediation, and in a treaty, dated April, 1393, they swear, each for himself, in the faith of all honour, as loyal knights, fidelity to the duke and duchess, and to the earl of Montfort ; while the duke engages, " in loyalty and good faith, as their true prince and faithful knight, to aid, support, and guard their bodies and estates ;" and Joan, on her part, as though an independent sovereign, agrees to " promise, grant, and swear, that she will aid and defend the aforesaid." *

These solemn treaties were as ill kept as the former ; and war again broke out. Meanwhile, the duke was engaged in the project of marrying his eldest son, a child in his eighth year, to the second daughter of the king of France ; and his eldest daughter, Mary, a child seven years old, to the eldest son of the earl of Derby—Henry, in after years, the hero of Azincourt. The proposal of the ambitious duke seems to have been received favourably by the court of France, for the young prince was conducted to Paris by his father, and affianced to the young princess in December, 1396. The project for the marriage of the daughter was, however, broken off, and she was subsequently affianced to the earl of Alençon.

Although unsuccessful in this attempt to form an alliance with England, the sister of the duke soon

* Lobinau, vol. ii. p. 768.

after married an English nobleman, Reynold Basset, of Drayton; and on the occasion of the interview between king Richard and the French king, he was present, and renewed his homage for his English possession, the earldom of Richmond. During his repeated absence from his duchy, the administration of affairs seems to have devolved upon Joan of Navarre; and she thus became qualified for the exercise of those important duties which so soon after she was called to fulfil.

The disturbances which broke out during the following year in England, attracted the attention of the politic duke; and when, on the death of John of Gaunt, Henry set out on his return to England, ostensibly to claim his inheritance, but, in reality, to challenge the crown, accompanied by the exiled archbishop, Arundel, he passed through Bretagne, and received the warmest welcome, and the most liberal offers of assistance from John the Valiant. According to Froissart, he was feasted by the duke and duchess for several days, and when he at length took his departure, he was accompanied to Plymouth by three of the duke's vessels, full of cross-bowmen and men-at-arms. How little did John the Valiant think that, ere the year closed, he should be among the dead;—that Henry should possess himself of his cousin's crown, and that Joan of Navarre should share it with him!

On the 2nd of November, 1399, the duke, after a very short illness, died, leaving seven infant children, the youngest only a few weeks old. By a codicil, dictated during his last illness, he appointed Joan

one of the executors and sole guardian of his children, and he was interred in the cathedral of Nantes, in the tomb of his second wife, where his effigy in complete mail, still remains.

Encouraged by the unprotected state of the duchy, the duke of Orleans, only a few days after the father's death, marched to Pontorson with a number of troops, intending to seize the children. With this view he wrote to the chief men of Bretagne, but they, true to their allegiance, rejected his proposals. Joan, now in possession of supreme power, proceeded to enter into a treaty with de Clisson, who, as friend or enemy, was equally important; and having established peace on all sides, she made preparations for the inauguration of her son as duke of "the ancient kingdom," for thus it was pertinaciously styled by the Bretons, "of Bretagne." Meanwhile, Joan became involved in an ecclesiastical contest with the bishop of Quimper, who demanded that all dues on merchandize paid at that port, should be his. In consequence, he caused sixty casks of wine, which had been seized by her lieutenant for non-payment of dues, to be carried within the precincts of his own palace, and then, clad in full pontificals, he proceeded to the market-place with all his clergy, and forbade, on pain of excommunication, that any dues should be paid to the civil power. The officer still proceeded to exact his dues, the bishop excommunicated him; and the duchess appealed from this turbulent prelate to the archbishop of Tours, who summoned him. The summons was refused, and war raged for a long time between the archbishop and the bishop. Peace was

eventually restored, and although neither Lobinau nor Morice can discover the exact result, it would seem that the civil power triumphed, for we find Joan, soon after appointing the lieutenant, in reward of his spirited conduct, governor of Quimper.

In March, 1401, the inauguration of the young duke took place. According to contemporary authorities, it was celebrated with great magnificence. After making his public entry into Rennes, accompanied by his mother and the nobles, he watched all night as a candidate of chivalry, before the high altar of the cathedral. On the following morning he received the accolade from Olivier de Clisson, and so carelessly were the laws of chivalry now administered, that the little boy who had just received knighthood, bestowed the same honour on his two younger brothers, infants, who could scarcely walk alone.

It was during this year that Joan of Navarre received proposals of marriage from Henry the Fourth. Her great dower, to which, shortly before his death, her late husband had added the whole county of Nantes, but more especially the power which she possessed, as guardian to the young duke, over so important a territory, viewed both in relation to France and England, as Bretagne, were probably the causes which induced Henry to make the offer; and anxious to secure the protection of the king of England, as well as that of France for her infant children, Joan did not refuse the crown of the Plantagenets. On the 3rd of April, 1402, she was contracted by proxy to the king, at the palace of Eltham. On this occasion we learn, from the curious contemporary document,

that Antony Ricze, brought a letter from the duchess, authorising him to perform her part of the ceremony, he therefore swore on the gospels, "which he bodily touched," that "the aforesaid lady was free to contract any marriage. Then the king said, 'I Henry, of Lancastre, kyng of Englande and of Fraunce, and lorde of Irland, yow Johanne, duchesse of Bretagne and countesse of Richmond, in the person of Antoine Ricze, your very procurator in this partie, to this matrimoyne, take unto my wife, and thereto I plighte you my troth.' Then the said Antoine said, 'I, Antoine Ricze, in the person of my worshipful lady, dame Johanne, the daughter of Charles, sometime kyng of Navarre, duchesse of Bretagne, and countess of Richmond, take yow Henry of Lancastre, kyng of Englande and of Fraunce, and lorde of Irland, unto my husband, and thereto I Antoine, in the soule of my lady aforesaid, plight yow my troth.' "*

It was not until the close of the year that preparations for the marriage were completed. There was a dispensation to be obtained; for Henry and Joan were cousins in the fourth degree; Christendom was at this time still divided by the claims of the rival popes, and Henry acknowledged Boniface of Rome, while Joan and the duchy, Benedict at Avignon; and there was a dispensation to be obtained on this account also. Meanwhile Joan sent to the duke of Burgundy, who met her at Nantes, to commit to his care the young duke and his three brothers. On this occasion he presented splendid gifts to her and her children. He then took leave of the duchess, and

* Lobinau, vol. ii. p. 874.

proceeded with his young charge toward Paris. The account given of this journey, vividly shows the rudeness of Bretagne, as compared with France and England. Although at this period, litters of most splendid construction, and apparently very comfortable, were in common use, no mode of travelling save on horseback, seems to have been known in Bretagne; as, therefore, the two younger children were too little to hold themselves on their horses, attendants were provided for that purpose, and thus did infants, who had scarcely left the cradle, perform a wearisome journey of more than two hundred miles.

The fleet destined to convey Joan to England, and having on board Henry Beaufort, then bishop of Lincoln, and the earls of Somerset and Worcester, anchored off Camaret, and hither, accompanied by her two youngest daughters, notwithstanding the tempestuous weather, she repaired on the 13th of January, 1403, and embarked. The last act of Joan previously to leaving her duchy, has been represented as very contrary to her usual prudence; for she was about to assign the government of Nantes and Tourneuve, to de Clisson, who offered her 12,000 crowns. Her intention was, however, defeated by the governor of the city of Nantes, who declared that, having sworn on the gospels but a few days before that he would keep the city and castle for the duke of Burgundy, he would yield them to no one but him. A sufficient reason for Joan's conduct, may however be found in the curious letter addressed by her escort to the privy council.* From this we find that so empty was the

* Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. p. 189.

king's exchequer, that the mariners and men-at-arms clamoured for arrears of pay, even before the vessels left Portsmouth, and that when after an ineffectual attempt to proceed they were obliged to put back, the embassy were actually afraid to make a second attempt, lest the men should mutiny. Committing herself therefore, not merely to the mercy of the waves, but far worse, to the mercy of a crew on the point of mutiny for want of payment, we may well excuse the anxiety of Joan to raise money, even though it were by the sale of so important a portion of her dower.

The fleet sailed the next day, intending to put in at Southampton, but the weather was so stormy that they were forced into Falmouth, where Joan and her attendants landed on the 19th, and proceeded to Winchester, where the king, with a large concourse of nobles, met them, and where, on the 7th of February, she was married. The following week she made her entry into London, and the records of many of the city companies show that Joan of Navarre was received with all customary splendour. She proceeded to Westminster, and was there crowned by archbishop Arundel, on the 25th.

If Joan expected that in exchanging the coronet of Bretagne for the crown of England she should lead a more peaceful life, she was doomed to severe disappointment. The situation of England at this period was peculiarly unsettled; a large and influential party was opposed to the title of Henry, and during the whole of his reign harassed him alike with private plots, and open warfare. The opinions of the lol-

lards were making rapid progress among the middle classes, and when Henry professed himself their determined opponent, the aid which he received from the high church party, ill compensated for the hostility with which from henceforth he was viewed by a large portion of the people. In Wales, rebellion was raging; Scotland maintained but a hollow peace, his "adversary of France" was eagerly watching his opportunity to commence the warfare anew, while the exchequer was almost empty, and the king overwhelmed with debts. Ere the summer closed war broke out with France; and Bretagne, now under the government of the duke of Burgundy, took part against England. The Breton mariners pillaged Jersey and Guernsey, and made a descent on Plymouth, which they burnt; but William de Wilford, a gallant mariner, collected a fleet manned by 6000 men, and made ample reprisals, taking forty valuable ships on the coast of Bretagne, and setting fire to Penmarch, and St. Malo. The circumstances of a war so soon breaking out between England and Bretagne, and being carried on with such violence, were unfortunate for Joan of Navarre; since popular hostility so naturally excited against the Bretons, could scarcely fail to view that queen, who was so lately chief in the government of Bretagne, as an enemy to the interests of England. It was probably this feeling, in some measure at least, that induced the parliament which met on the morrow of St. Hilary, 1404, to recommend to the king, "that no alien, whether man or woman, should remain in the household, either of the king or of my lady the queen, but that they quit the realm with all

possible haste.”* The reasons afterwards given are, “first, because they belong to the party of the anti-pope, (Benedict at Avignon), by which the souls of the lieges of the said king may be put in jeopardy, and secondly, (and probably this was the true reason,) because they may, by letters or otherwise, inform the enemies of the state of the secrets of the kingdom, and the council.” The petition then goes on to demand, “that all French, Bretons, Lombards, Italians, and Navarrese, whether schismatics or not, be they men or women, be removed from the hostels of the king and queen, saving and excepting the daughters of my lady the queen, Marie Sante, Nicholas Alderwyche, and John Puryan,† and their wives.” To this petition the king gave his assent,—and afterwards, “for the greater ease, comfort, and consolation of my lady the queen, and my ladies her daughters, it was granted,” that Charles de Navarre Mont-ferrand, the queen’s chamberlain, Guillaume Arnaud, the demoiselle Peronelle, together with two chamberlains, one governess, two esquires, a nurse, and another chamberlain for the queen’s daughters, should be allowed to remain.

From the Issue Rolls, we learn that 10,000*l.* yearly had been assigned to Joan as her dower; in the same parliament we find she presented a petition, stating that she could not obtain the full sum, and praying that lands and tenements might be assigned her, to make up the required amount, which was

* Parl. Roll. vol. iii. p. 527.

† Sir John Puryan was master of the horse to the queen, and, as appears from his epitaph in Gough, had been previously in the service both of Richard and Henry; his wife was one of Joan’s maids of honour.

granted. Meanwhile, the duke of Burgundy died, and the young duke of Bretagne, who had been committed with his brothers to his care, having just before been declared of age, returned from Paris to take possession of his inheritance. According to Morice, the queen, in November of this year, gave him 6,000*l.* rents, arising from lands in Normandy, besides a debt of 60,000*l.* due from her brother, the king of Navarre. The making such presents, at a period when the English exchequer was so closely drained, and just after she had earnestly petitioned for the full payment of her annual allowance, affords us no favourable view of the character of Joan of Navarre; still, it is possible that the money might have been actually due to the young duke, and she, in honour, bound to repay it.

The recommendation of the commons respecting Joan's household, although assented to by the king, was not, it seems, carried into execution. Henry was, during the following year, engaged in ineffectual negotiations with France, and from a precept in the *Fœdera*, affording safe-conduct to John de Boyas, secretary to the queen, in going to and returning from Nantes, respecting her former dower, of which that county formed an important part, it appears that some misunderstanding had arisen respecting it.

In 1406 parliament met; and in a petition, dated in March,* they complain, that although they have supplicated many times for the removal of the alien French and Bretons, they yet remain. The king promises, in the mongrel language of the Rolls, that

* Parl. Rolls, vol. iii. p. 571.

it shall be done, "*ove toute le haste possible.*" In May, a list of forty-four names is presented, and it is requested that they be sent away by the 24th of the same month. The names in this list go far to prove that hostility to the queen, arising from some unknown cause, was the source of this request; for although "Robinet the secretary, and friar John de Boyas," might be considered capable of communicating important information to enemies abroad, yet "little Merydene," "Nicholas Britayn the cook," "J. Vadlet, laundress," and two assistants, could scarcely be able to do much injury to the kingdom. In June, they petition that her dower may be made up to 10,000*l.* "since the deficiency is now supplied by wardships, marriages, and other casualties," which were probably thought to give her more influence than a mere annuity would afford; and then, in the very words of the parliament of 1388, they petition "that my lady the queen pay, each day she resides in the same hostel with the king, the same sum as was paid by Philippa, late queen of England, and that these payments be deducted from that which my lady takes at the exchequer." As during the remainder of Henry's reign we find no similar petitions, it is most probable that the king was at length compelled to yield, and to dismiss all the queen's foreign attendants.

Hitherto the court of Henry appears to have afforded a gloomy contrast to those of his immediate predecessors; no records of feastings, jousts, or tournaments, meet us for the first six years of his reign, although, when earl of Derby, he was eminent among his fellow-nobles for his skill in chivalric exercises.

In his seventh year, however, we find several precepts in the *Fœdera*, granting safe-conduct to the earl of Moray, who had challenged the earl of Kent "to do feats of arms." From these we learn, that this friendly contest was undertaken by the express sanction of the king, who directed it should take place at Smithfield, in his presence. It was postponed from time to time, but at length was fought in January, 1407, when, as Fabyan informs us, the earl of Kent gained a complete victory. It appears that on this occasion, Henry, probably in imitation of Richard, who, it will be remembered, gave collars with his badge, the white hart, at the tournament in 1390, first adopted the especial Lancastrian badge, the collar of SS. In an entry in the Issue Roll of this year, there is a minute description of a collar made for the king, with "esses and flowers of forget-me-not," and the motto "*soviernes*" enamelled; and the origin of the device and the motto, has exercised the ingenuity of numerous heralds and antiquaries. In the midst of many far-fetched fancies and conflicting opinions, little more can be ascertained than that the letter S referred to the motto, "*souveigne vous de moy*," which always accompanied the device of the forget-me-not; and that that flower, and that motto, were adopted by the earl of Derby full ten years before he seized the crown. What was the reason of his adoption of them, rather than a device of more strictly heraldic character, and wherefore, when king, he still preferred the apparently unmeaning SS to the swan, or the antelope, are questions which cannot be answered, but which may

probably receive a solution when greater light shall be thrown on the popular history of this period. But although its origin is unknown, the collar of SS, of all the devices of the Plantagenets, alone retains its place; and to the present day, alternating with the portcullis of the Tudors, the badge of the aspiring Bolingbroke, forms the collar of the chief-justices and of the chief-baron.*

During the summer, the two daughters of the queen, who had been a short time before recalled by their brother, were affianced: Blanche, the elder, to the count Armagnac, and Margaret, to Alaih de Rohan; and soon after, the duke himself, having concluded a treaty with his father-in-law, came over on a visit to his mother. It was about this time that the health of the king began to fail, and by the superstitious, especially those who still remembered Richard with regret, it was considered as the direct visitation of Heaven for his executions of the adherents of the former monarch, and chiefly of archbishop Scrope. From this period to his death, although scarcely more than forty, Henry seems to have experienced all the infirmities of advanced age; he was frequently unable to meet his council, often wholly incapacitated from attending to affairs of state, while, what was even worse to a monarch placed on the throne by the popular voice, the very nature of his disorder, a malignant leprous humour,

* In the inventory of plate belonging to Edward III. and Richard, alluded to in a former chapter, "*viii lettres de S pur un coler*", occurs; also a silver basin, with "*un coler gravie oves lettres de S delivré de mons. de Lancaster*"; this entry would seem to prove that it was also John of Gaunt's livery, for the duke of Lancaster, at the time this inventory was made, was king.

which settled in the lower part of his face, precluded him from those frequent appearances in public, which, during the middle ages, were imperatively demanded both by nobles and people. It was at this period, probably, that Joan began to take a more active part in affairs of state, and although we cannot ascertain what line of conduct she pursued, still, that she increased the hostility of some of the members of the council against her, their conduct in the following reign sufficiently proves. That Joan, if not warmly beloved by the people, was not viewed by *them* with any dislike, is evident both from the total absence of every expression of hostility against her in the records of contemporary writers, and the stainless character, with one singular exception, (into the truth of which we shall hereafter enquire) which she bears.

In the course of the following year, we meet with an entry in the *Fœdera* which proves the advancing state of the arts in England; it is a letter of safe-conduct for a vessel bound to Nantes, having on board the tomb of alabaster which the queen caused to be made for duke John the Valiant by English workmen, and which was afterwards set up in the cathedral of Nantes. Another precept, which occurs soon after, is curious from its homely character; it is "six fodder of lead, to be sent free of custom," at the request of the queen, to her son the duke, "for covering a certain messuage of his situated in those parts," apparently not a very "right royal" gift.

Through the exertions of Joan of Navarre, the truce between Bretagne and England was extended for two years longer; and while Henry Beaufort was

labouring for the marriage of the king's eldest son with one of the French king's daughters, and Henry enjoyed a short interval of repose from the plots and rebellions which harassed his whole reign, preparations were made to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, in 1410, with a splendour that recalled the chivalrous days of Henry's grandfather. "That same year," says Fabyan, "the seneschal of Hainault came to England with a goodly company, and challenged the earl of Somerset." The lists were enclosed in Smithfield, and a scaffold was erected for the king and his whole court. On the first day the seneschal and the earl jousted, and the earl was triumphant; the next day a knight of Hainault tilted against sir Richard Arundel, first on horseback, and then on foot, with axes; on this occasion victory remained with the foreigner, for he brought his antagonist "to hys kne." On the third day, sir John Cornwall maintained bravely the chivalric character of "ye Englishmanne," while on the five following days the esquires only tilted; and two English esquires won such honour in the lists, that the king himself made them knights. At the close of this gallant tournament, the king having feasted the strangers and presented them with rich gifts, dismissed them, to tell in other lands that the prowess of England was still unrivalled.

In the following year, the negociations for the marriage of the king's eldest son with a daughter of the French king having failed, overtures were made to the duke of Burgundy for a marriage with one of his daughters, but with no better success. The friendly alliance with the duke of Burgundy, how-

ever, continued ; and in August some troops, at his request, were sent him from England. These, after a short stay, were hastily dismissed ; and Henry, probably offended at this, early in the following year signed a treaty with the head of the opposing faction, Orleans ; “ many persons wondering,” says Walsingham, “ that in so short a space of time the English should support two opposite parties.”

In the following year prince Henry,—the popular story of whose excesses is apparently most unfounded—and who, up to this period, was most active both in the field and at the council table, ceased to be of the council. Whether he was dismissed by his father, or indignantly withdrew himself, it is impossible to ascertain ; still, that Joan of Navarre fomented the difference between father and son, “ to check the growing interest of her son-in-law, to diminish his fame, and to tarnish his honour,” as the biographer of Henry the Fifth has averred, is altogether without foundation. With one single exception, the good understanding between the younger Henry and his mother-in-law, continued unbroken even to his death. Nor had Joan any inducement to set the father against the son. She had no children by her second marriage, and, consequently, the hope that they might eventually wear the crown could have no place in her mind ; while, even if she had had a second family, there were *four* sons of the king’s first marriage, all arrived at manhood, and all on the most brotherly terms with each other. A stranger in England, an object evidently of hostility to some of the king’s advisers, Joan must certainly have forfeited all claim

to the possession of superior sense, had she incited a husband, now drawing near his end, against a son, who in a few months would inevitably possess all his power and authority. We may go farther, and argue from an entry in the Issue Roll of the first year of Henry the Fifth, that to the end of his father's life Joan and he were on the most friendly terms. This entry is "To Joan, queen of England, for £100, paid in part of a greater sum due to her, on a certain private agreement, made between the said king and queen, and especially concerning the marriage of the earl of March, purchased and obtained of the said lady queen, when the king was prince of Wales." Thus the most friendly and confidential negotiations were passing between the prince and his mother-in-law, at the time when his difference with his father arose.*

It was happy for the chivalrous young Henry, that from whatever cause it originated, that difference was soon after made up; nor was the death-bed of the father embittered by the hostile conduct of his eldest son. The king was now sinking very fast; he however kept his Christmas at Eltham, and summoned a parliament, which was to meet in February. A

* That popular belief pointed out Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, as fomenter of the difference between father and son, is evident from his speech several years afterwards, when he was publicly reconciled to the duke of Gloucester. "And furthermore, as I am noised, how yatte I shuld have stirred ye kyng yatte last dyed, ye tyme also when he was prynce, to have ye governance of yis reume, and ye croune opon hym." (Vide *Parl. Rolls*, vol. iv., p. 293.) A rumour, which it is true he solemnly declares to have been without foundation, but which could scarcely have arisen, unless he had in some way taken part with the prince in his quarrel. It may also be remarked, that the earl of March mentioned here was that ward of the king, whose stealing by the duke of York, was the ground of those proceedings against him, which ended in his imprisonment and confiscation of his estates.

singular, but apparently well-authenticated, tale is recorded of his death. He had been told in his youth by some soothsayer, that he should not die until he had visited Jerusalem; and after his seizure of his cousin's crown, in the vain hope of expiation, he made a solemn vow that he would visit the holy land. The plots and insurrections with which he was harassed left him no opportunity to fulfil his vow; still he bore it in earnest remembrance, and was accustomed to say that he should not die, until he had seen Jerusalem. When seized with his last and fatal attack, he was carried from the Confessor's chapel to a neighbouring chamber, and laid on the couch before the fire. "What call you the name of this room?" said the dying king. "Jerusalem," was the reply. "The prophecy is fulfilled," said he, "I shall never go hence alive;" and there, soon after, praying earnestly for mercy, the bold and ambitious, but, we may hope, penitent Henry expired.

By the provisions of his will,* dated January 1408, "he directs that he be buried at Canterbury, and a chantry of two priests founded;"—that the

* This is the first of the royal wills in English, and it begins:—"In the name of God, fadir, son, and holy gost, three persons and one God. I, Henry, sinful wretch, by the grace of God, kyng of England, and of Fraunce, and lord of Irland, being in my holic mynd, mak my testament in manere and forme that suyth. Fyrst, I bequeth to Almyghty God my sinful soul, the whyche had never been worthy to be man, but thro' hys mercy and hys grase; whiche lyffe I have mispendye, whereof I put myself wholily in hys grace and hys mercye, with all myn herte. Also, I thank all my lordis and trew peple for the trew servyse that they have done to me, and I ask them forgiveness if I have misentreted hem in any wyse." It is a singular coincidence, that the will of Joan's first husband (to be found in Lobinau), is as Protestant in its preamble as this is. From the testimony of Hardyng, it would appear that Henry died very penitent, and his will corroborates that testimony.

queen should "be endowed of the duchy of Lancaster, that of my goodis restitution be made to all them that I have wrongfully aggrieved, or any good had of theirs wythout just tyle;" and "for the great trust I have in my son the prynce, I mak hym executor," together with the archbishop of Canterbury and four others. The body of the king was accordingly conveyed to Canterbury, and there buried, and Henry the Fifth commenced his short but brilliant reign.

During the two first years of her widowhood, Joan of Navarre seems to have remained unmolested; she was, however, visited soon after the king's death with another severe bereavement in the death of her third son, Giles of Bretagne, a promising young prince, who died shortly after his return from England, at Cosnesur-Loire. But with the preparations for the war with France, and the consequent transfer of royal authority to the lords of the council, her troubles commenced. In the third year of the young king, the same parliament that voted him two-tenths and two-fifteenths, in aid of the war which he had proclaimed against France, and for which he was now preparing at Southampton, presented a petition which stated, that "as Henry the Fourth, in the seventh year of his reign did ordain, that to avoid disclosing the secrets of the kingdom, and carrying away the money and jewels of the kingdom, that all sorts of aliens, Bretons as others, not being denizens, should be 'cleanly voided,' (*nettement avoidée*) and depart the realm, never to return on pain of life and limb;" and that, as notwithstanding this ordinance, many Bretons

are come into the kingdom, and some dwell in the hostel of the queen, and some very near it, to hear, discover and learn the secrets of the realm, and to carry money and jewels out of the kingdom, and as the Bretons are the greatest enemies, that it be ordained that all such shall depart the kingdom, and that they go before the feast of St. John the Baptist.* This petition, which almost charged the queen with being in league with the enemies of the king, was granted. But it was the duke of Bedford, who now acted as regent, that gave the assent, not Henry, for he, only five days after the expulsion of her foreign domestics, issued a precept at Southampton, so singularly respectful in its character, as to prove that vindictive feelings alone, could have dictated the foregoing petition. This precept, which will be found in the *Fœdera*, is dated June 30th, and it directs, "that our dearest mother Joan, queen of England," shall have licence to reside during his absence in his castles of Wallingford, Hertford, Berkhamstead, or Windsor, the noblest and most favourite of all the royal palaces. Surely, had there been any ground for believing that Joan was in league with France, the free occupation of four most important castles would never have been assigned her.

To which of these castles Joan retired we cannot learn, nor where she was when, in autumn, the news of the glorious victory of Azincourt arrived. The situation of Joan at this period was very trying, for the victory which placed her illustrious son-in-law first among the chivalry of the age, gave her second

* *Parl. Rolls*, vol. iv. p. 79.

son, Arthur of Richmond, a young prince already distinguished for his valour, a wounded captive into the hands of his enemies. He was in the service of France, and while fighting bravely was severely wounded, and after the battle he was discovered beneath a heap of the slain, so disfigured that he was only recognized by the armorial bearings on his surcoat. Towards this young prince, as toward his other noble and royal prisoners, Henry conducted himself with that chivalrous courtesy which proved him a worthy descendant of the hero of Cressy. Although Arthur of Richmond remained some years in England, he seems to have been on his parole, and to have resided mostly at Windsor, probably with his mother. His elder brother, the duke, was not at the battle; when it was fought, he had only arrived at Amiens, unwilling probably to break his treaty with England on the one hand, and to bear arms against his father-in-law on the other.

While Henry pursued his conquests in France, Joan of Navarre seems to have continued unmolested in the possession of the honours which her chivalrous son-in-law had assigned her; and that his respectful attention to her was unabated, we have evidence in the precepts issued in his sixth year, which direct that sixty barrels of wine and some other articles, shall be received at London, duty free, "for the use of the queen our dearest mother," and he grants safe conduct and free export to the St. Nicholas of Nantes, laden with presents from the queen to her daughter-in-law the duchess of Bretagne, consisting of "three palfreys and their trappings, a popinjay" (*papegeay*),

the earliest notice to be found of this favourite bird, "five yards of scarlet cloth, five of Persblieu, (probably Paris-blue), cloth of London, and two horns." Jacotin de Hasse, horse-buyer for the queen, with four horses, and "a certain organ player," have also letters of safe conduct.* In April, 1419, Arthur of Richmond obtained licence to leave England for a short time, and, together with Charles of Artois, signed an obligation at Windsor Castle, "not to bear arms against the king, but to continue faithful prisoners." Whither he proceeded is not stated, but there is a precept dated in August, directing the governor of Fotheringay castle to receive him into his custody. Meanwhile Henry continued in France, pursuing the war with redoubled spirit, and had advanced almost to Paris, when the assassination of the duke of Burgundy, opened a way to the attainment of his highest wishes.

It was about this time, according to Walsingham, and his statement is corroborated by the parliamentary rolls, that a grievous charge was brought against Joan of Navarre, "of certain evil doing committed to the injury of the king."† This statement is sufficiently obscure, but in the curious chronicle of London we find that the charge against Joan was, that by "*nigromancie* she compassed the king's death." In consequence of this charge she was deprived of all her attendants, committed prisoner to the castle of Pevensey, in the custody of sir John Pelham; and the following extract from the rolls of parliament, comprises all the additional information which can be obtained.

* Feeder, vol. ix.

† Wals. p. 401.

“ Be it remembered, that on information made to our king, both by relation and confession of a certain friar, John Randolf, of the order of the friars minors, as by other credible evidences, that Joan, queen of England, had compassed and imagined the death and destruction of the king, in the most strange and horrible manner that could be devised, the which devising and imagining hath been openly published throughout the kingdom :—that, therefore, all the goods and chattels of the said queen, and all the goods and chattels of Roger Colles of Shrewsbury, and of Peronell Brocart, formerly residing with the said queen, the which were openly suspected of the aforesaid treason, be confiscated ; and that whatever the queen may have received from castles, manors, lordships, &c., since the 27th of September, shall be received and kept by the treasurer of England.”* The date of this document is October, and from a petition presented in the second year of Henry the Sixth, by Joan, we find that it passed in consequence of a warrant addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Winchester and Durham, and treasurer John Stafford, by Henry himself, and dated October the 3rd. In consequence, her dower was confiscated, and during the short remaining period of her son-in-law's reign, the Issue Rolls afford repeated instances of the various uses to which it was applied. From an entry in the same rolls, we find that the sentence of confiscation of her goods was rigorously enforced, and also, that at the time of her committal to Pevensey castle she was under pecu-

* Parl. Rolls, vol. iv. p. 118.

niary difficulties: for two years after, we find one Elinor de St. Amande paying 80*l.*, the value of a golden girdle belonging to Joan, "which had been pledged to her by the queen, and forfeited to her for non-payment."*

No doubt seems to have existed, in the minds of the few writers who have referred to this obscure passage in the life of Henry the Fifth, of the guilt of Joan of Navarre; and apparently arguing from the circumstance of her being a foreigner and a step-mother, they have considered it very likely that she should have engaged in machinations against the king's life. But it should be borne in mind, that the national hostility which certainly existed between the commons of France and England had no place in the minds of the higher classes, who by repeated intermarriages were become almost one family; that Joan of Navarre, both by birth and by her first marriage, was likely rather to become attached to the English, than to the French party. Her father, Charles of Navarre, fought side by side with the Black Prince in nearly all his wars, and John the Valiant, educated in England, and allied to the Plantagenets, both by his first and second marriages, continued a steadfast ally to England, with one exception, during his whole life: nor, as was formerly remarked, could Joan as step-mother gain aught by injuring her son-in-law: if she really did attempt his life, some vindictive feel-

* This golden girdle is in the inventory of King Henry the Fifth's jewels, and is described as being set with sapphires, pearls, and rubies, and with a "pendant" of jewellery; the weight of the gold alone is twenty-one ounces. There is a gold cup with the arms of Navarre, in the same list, evidently also belonging to Joan.

ing must have been the cause; and yet, what ground could there be for such a feeling? Henry had always treated her with singular respect; he was at this time in strict amity with her eldest son; and although her second son was still his prisoner, he had behaved toward him with all the courtesies of chivalry, and soon after, in consequence of his brother's detention by the earl of Penthievre, granted him a release for more than two years. That Joan had, almost from her first entrance into England, been an object of hostility to some of the king's council, the extracts from the parliament rolls prove; we may therefore in common justice demand, that when at length, during her widowhood, and in the absence of the king her protector, so grievous a charge as that of having "compassed and imagined the death and the destruction of the king in the most strange and horrible manner" was brought against her, some proof should be given of its truth. But proof we have none;—not even an account of what this "strange and horrible" death was intended to be, although, in other instances of a like kind, the rolls of parliament are specific enough. Happily for the fair fame of Joan of Navarre, the mere recorder of the passing events of the day in the chronicle of London, has supplied the deficiency, and in the single word "nigromancie" we have a key to the whole.

Although in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries magical practices were punishable by the common law, during the middle ages such practices (and they were almost unknown) were considered as under the cognisance of the church courts only; and thus,

while we might look in vain in the records of our law courts for instances of such crimes, we occasionally find references to them in the acts of ecclesiastical councils, and from thence we learn, that those who practised them were always classed with heretics. This will, therefore, account alike for the warrant of the king not being addressed to his law-officers, but to the heads of the English church, and also for the absence of any specific statement on the parliament rolls. This will also prove that the charge against Joan originated in ecclesiastical hostility ; and when we remember that the earlier attacks made upon her were precisely the same as those made against Anne of Bohemia ; that in both cases their attendants were charged with being enemies to the realm, and their immediate expulsion demanded ; it is impossible to resist the conviction that she had imbibed religious opinions similar to those of her predecessor.

Since the times of Anne of Bohemia, lollardism had made great progress ; and the fear with which its extension was viewed by the dignified clergy, is proved by the sanguinary enactments which they procured against it. On his accession to his cousin's throne, Bolingbroke, aided through every step of his ambitious career by the higher clergy, declared himself their firm ally, and repaid the assistance they had afforded him by becoming the bitter persecutor of the lollards. But this sect was not to be put down by the mandate of the king : like the Puritans of a later day, they met, in defiance of his prohibitions, to demand those rights which depended not upon the will of the monarch, nor even on the statutes of the

realm, but upon the eternal principles of truth and justice, and thus laid themselves open, like their brethren of the seventeenth century, to the charge of treason. But while the mass of the lollards became obnoxious to the civil power from their persevering spirit of resistance, there were others, who by less direct, but more influential methods, sought to advance the cause,—the writers, many of whom in the solitude of the cloister watched the progress of this wide-spreading heresy, until, convinced of its truth, they became its converts, and sent forth those anonymous works which, more than any other means, aided its diffusion. Now, against them, the vague, but awful and mysterious charge of “necromancy,” could be easily and successfully preferred, because not merely did such a charge consign them to the punishment of the ecclesiastical power, but it effectually cut them off from the sympathy of the people. And thus we find co-extensively with the spread of lollardism, are complaints of the spread of magical arts, reiterated in the ecclesiastical councils.*

On the death of Arundel, just after that of Henry the Fourth, Chicheley succeeded to the primacy, and he soon distinguished himself, not only as a fierce

* A precept, addressed, in 1406, by Henry to the bishop of Lincoln, will be found in the *Fœdera*, which states, that information having been given “that many sorcerers, magicians, incantators, necromancers, diviners, and others, who daily perpetrate many horrible and detestable arts,” are in his diocese, “by which means many of our people are perverted by their damnable ways, and commotion raised among them, to the scandal of holy mother church, and manifest perversion of the Catholic faith,” that they shall therefore be sought out, and diligently examined, and committed to prison until they repent. The reader will observe how evident the reference to the lollards is in this precept. It may be also remarked, that in the diocese of Lincoln, which includes Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, the greatest number of lollards dwelt.

persecutor of the lollards, but as a zealous maintainer of the temporalities of the church, at a time when her immense possessions were looked upon with a jealous eye, not merely by lollards, but by many in parliament. Associated with him was the bishop of Winchester, better known to the reader as cardinal Beaufort, a prelate of indomitable pride, and equally distinguished with Chicheley for his zealous maintenance of what he considered the temporal rights of the church. To two such prelates Joan of Navarre, whose short regency in Bretagne had been distinguished by a violent contest with the bishop of Quimper, on the very point so vehemently maintained by them, could not but be obnoxious; and although their hostility might slumber during the reign of her husband, and find no scope for its exercise in the earlier years of her son-in-law's reign, yet, during his prolonged absence, and now, when invested with supreme ecclesiastical control, and having the regent, the duke of Bedford, subservient to their wishes, the opportunity was too favourable to be lost. In bringing the charge of "necromancy" against the queen, they not only took the whole management of her case under their exclusive control, but they exhibited her alike to the king and people in a character more than any other calculated to excite their horror. The chivalrous and generous hero of Azincourt might have forgiven even private plots, but the malignity which sought to fulfil its deadly purpose, through the direct agency of the powers of darkness, must have appeared to him indeed undeserving of pardon.

Amid the paucity of information, which with the greatest research can be obtained on this subject, enough can be collected to show that the charge was skillfully made, both in regard to the time and the manner. A little earlier, Arthur of Richmond would still have been at large, ready to go at once to the king to vindicate his mother's honour; a little earlier, too, Henry would have had more leisure to institute a minute inquiry; but at the close of September, Arthur of Richmond had just returned to his confinement at Fotheringay, and Henry was now closely engaged in those negotiations which eventually gave him the supreme rule over France. There was also some degree of management exercised in bringing this charge. On the 25th of September, Chicheley issued a mandate, directing that special prayers and processions should be made throughout the diocese of Canterbury, "for the good estate, prosperity, and happy expedition of the lord king and his army; and that God would grant of his greatest mercy to aid, preserve, and protect him against all the wicked malice and evil-doing of his enemies, and the divinations of necromancers, such chiefly as of late, *it is said*, were devised to the injury and destruction of his person, by some; forasmuch as the detection of such iniquities, and the preservation of his person from them, has been only through the goodness of God omnipotent."* The warrant of the king dates

* Wilkins's Concilia, vol. iii. p. 392. Two pages further on, we find an account of one Richard Walker, a priest, who was accused in November at St. Paul's of sorcery. The list of things found in his possession remind us of the trials for witchcraft in the sixteenth century; there was a box, which contained a beryl, "artificially hung in black leather," two books, written and painted with certain magical figures,

October 3rd, and thus, just when the public mind was excited with vague and mysterious reports, respecting some indefinable danger from which the king had escaped,—just while the solemn processions were being made, the mandate of Henry directing the confiscation of Joan's dower, is received. Respecting her accuser, John Randolph, little can be known; from an entry in the Pell Rolls we find a payment made for carrying him from Normandy to the Tower in the following February, where he continued some time, but was at length liberated by the duke of Gloster.*

Immediately on receiving intelligence of the disgrace of his mother, the duke of Bretagne sent an embassy to Henry, to solicit her liberation. The bishop of Nantes was at the head, and they proceeded to Melun, where the king then was, but with the result neither the historians of Bretagne nor of our own country acquaint us. The imprisonment of their mother made, however, no change in the friendly relations of Henry with the duke and his

three little scrolls, and two small figures made of yellow wax. On being questioned, he denied having ever made use of them. He was led along Westcheap with the books hung about his neck, and on his return they were taken off, and burnt with the other things before the south door of St. Paul's. He was afterwards set at liberty.

* In Hollingshed's account of the quarrel between cardinal Beaufort and the duke of Gloster, he gives the answer of the cardinal, charging the duke with various arbitrary acts, and among them, "that Scot, lieutenant of the Tower, brought friar Randolph unto him, the which had long before confessed treason done by him against the king's person which dead is, for the which he was kept in the Tower;" but that when he requested his prisoner back again, "my lord answered, his commandement was sufficient." Although in the account in the Parliament Rolls the answer of the cardinal is not given, still Hollingshed's account has the appearance of being derived from contemporary documents. This seems to prove that Beaufort was as anxious to keep Randolph in custody, as Gloster was to set him free.

brother; another proof that political feelings had no share in these events: and when in the following spring the duke became a prisoner in the hands of the earl of Penthievre, and the duchess earnestly entreated the king to allow Arthur of Richmond to return, he granted him leave of absence for two years and a half, merely stipulating that, at the end of the time, he should appear publicly in London, and there before the king, or, in his absence, some of the chief officers, or in their absence, before the lord mayor, and surrender himself prisoner.*

Meanwhile, the unhappy Joan of Navarre continued in close confinement at Pevensy castle, wholly surrounded by strangers, and without opportunity of clearing herself from these charges. According to some writers, her imprisonment continued ten years. This statement is wholly incorrect; for by means which we cannot discover, the king became convinced of her innocence a short time before his death, and sent an order for her immediate liberation. This document, which completely exonerates this much-injured woman, will be found in the rolls of parliament, and it is transcribed entire, both as a curious specimen of royal correspondence in the fifteenth century, and as being highly creditable to the feelings of the chivalrous king. It is addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Winchester and Durham, and the treasurer.

“Ryght worshipful faders in God, oure ryght trusty and well beloved. Howe be hit, that we had to tak into oure hande siche a certeyn tyme, and for

* *Fœdera*, vol. x.

siche causes as yow knowe, ye douairs of oure moder, quene Johanne, excepte a certeyn pension thereof yerely, whych we assigned for the expens reasonable of hir, and of a certeyn menyé that shulde abide about hir, we, doubtyng lest hit shulde be a charge unto oure conscience for to occupye forth longer, the said douair in this wyse, the which charge we be avisid no longer to bere in oure consciense,—wol and charge yow, that as ye will answer to God for us in this cas, and stand discharged in your owen consciens also, that ye mak deliverance unto oure said moder the quene, hoolly of her said douair, and suffre hir to reciss hit as she dyd here afore. And that she mak hir officers, whom hir lyst, so they be oure liegemen and goodmen; and that therefore ye yeve in charge and command at this tyme, to mak hir plein restitution of hir douair as aforesaid. Furthermore we wol charge you, that hir beddes, and al other thyng moveable that we had of hir ye deliver hir again, and ordeineth hir, that she have of siche cloth and of siche color as she wold devise herself, five or six gounes, suche as she useth to wear. And bicause we suppose she wol soon remove from the place wher she is now, that ye ordein hir horses for two chares, and lest hir remove thens into what oyer place wythin oure roiaume that hir lyst. Wryten the 13th day of Julye, the yere of oure regne 10th.”*

The earnestness with which the king adjures these prelates to fulfil his directions, proves alike, the com-

* Parl. Rolls, vol. iv. p. 248. It is rather singular that those writers who have quoted the document in p. 118, should not also have discovered this equally important one.

punction which he felt at his own conduct, and his conviction that they were unwilling to second his wishes. From the minute specifications of the latter part, we discover that Joan had been subjected to a confinement of no ordinary rigour; that she had been deprived not merely of the state, but of the very apparel of a queen—no mean addition to her sufferings in an age when the rank of each person was strictly defined by his dress; and thus the homely direction that Joan on coming forth from her prison should have gowns of “siche cloth and siche color as she wold devise herself,” was no mere courtesy, but a command that she should go forth in the eyes of the world an acknowledged queen, clad in the velvet, or cloth-of-gold robes, and with the ermine-lined mantle which none but a Plantagenet could wear.

The liberation of Joan, it is probable, immediately followed this order; and ere seven weeks had passed away the gallant Henry died. But although her liberty was granted, the “plein restitution of hir douair” was not so easily obtained; and, therefore, in the second parliament of Henry VI. we find her petitioning, that since Henry IV. had assigned her a certain dower which the late king had “resumed into his hands, without crime or defaulte of the said queen,” and as all her goods and chattels, &c. had been taken and carried to the exchequer, and as the late king, “moved of conscience, charged the reverend fathers in God, as they should answer to God, to make deliverance and full restitution to the said queen,” and as they had refused, she therefore prays

that justice may be done her.* The duke of Gloster was now protector of the kingdom, and he willingly supported her cause against prelates with whom he had never been on friendly terms, and she finally obtained full restitution.

From this time Joan of Navarre, now advancing in years, seems to have withdrawn in great measure from the world. In 1430, we find her sending commissioners to her son, the duke of Bretagne, to demand the arrears due from the county of Nantes; and two years after, a letter is addressed by order of the privy council to the duke upon the same subject. With the young king, Joan appears to have been very friendly. In one of the lists of his jewels we find "a tablet of gold set with jewels and the image of St. George thereon, with twelve lions of white enamel," and valued at a sum equal to between 2000*l.* or 3000*l.* present money, the gift of "quene Johanne;" and in the list of new-year's gifts for 1437, we find that the young king sent her "a tablyt of golde, with four baleys and a grete sapphir in ye middes." Of her illness, or the circumstances of her death, we possess no account. All we know is, that she died at Havering Bower, in a good old age, on July 3rd, 1437. In "Acts of the privy council" for that year, is the summons appointing her funeral for the 11th of August, at Canterbury, and commanding the attendance of the nobility, "al other thingis lefte, and excusations ceasyng." The duke and duchess of Gloster, many of the nobles, and the

* Parl. Rolls, vol. iv. p. 277.

archbishop of Canterbury, and other prelates, attended the solemnity; and she was laid in the tomb of her second husband, in the chapel of St. Thomas, at Canterbury.

Here, her effigy, displaying a countenance of much beauty, and a form of remarkable elegance, copied probably from a youthful portrait, may still be seen. She occupies the right-hand side of the tomb, a place usually given to the first wife, but assigned most probably to Joan of Navarre from the circumstance of her royal birth. She is royally robed, crowned, and wears the rather unusual female ornament, the collar of S S. Her feet rest on two ermines, the supposed badge of Bretagne; on the canopy that surmounts the tomb her paternal arms, and her motto, "*à temperance*," alternate with the arms of England, and the "*souveigné vous*" of her husband; and every detail of that magnificent tomb shows, that whatever unmerited disgrace Joan of Navarre sustained at one period of her life, every honour due to her birth and talents was paid to her memory.

KATHERINE OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

War with France—Azincourt—Negotiations respecting Henry's marriage—First interview of Henry and Katherine—Henry constituted regent of France—His marriage with Katherine—Her coronation feast—Henry's death and funeral—Education of the young king—Beauchamp, earl of Warwick—Henry's coronation—His second coronation at Paris—His entry into London—Katherine's second marriage—Owen Tudor—She retires to Bermondsey Abbey—Her death.

THE splendid triumphs of Henry the Fifth in France, and those results which gave him with the hand of the beautiful Katherine the regency of the kingdom during her father's life, and actual possession in case he survived him, are familiar to every reader of English history. In pursuing, therefore, in this chapter, the memoir of this queen, it will be sufficient merely to glance at those preceding events which led to her marriage with the victor of Azincourt.

From the death of Edward the Third, although friendly relations had for the most part been preserved with France, yet the remembrance of the laurels won by English prowess on its plains still rankled in the minds of the people; and loud were their murmurs, both against the luxurious indolence of Richard and the cautious policy of his successor, which prevented their emulating in the same land the chivalrous deeds of their fathers. It was not likely that a warlike young prince like Henry should listen to these mur-

murs unmoved : but probably the first serious thought of the conquest of France arose in his mind when, in 1410, he was sent with his brother to aid the Armagnacs against the duke of Burgundy, and was eye-witness both of their intestine divisions and real weakness. On his accession, he, however, did not immediately declare war, but engaged for some time in a series of negotiations, both with the French court, and with the opposing party of the duke of Burgundy. A little more than a year after, he suddenly demanded the crown of France. The demand was refused, and he then asked the provinces of Maine, Anjou, Normandy, Aquitaine, and half of Provence, that the arrears of the late king John's ransom should be paid, and that the princess Katherine, with a portion of two million of crowns, should be his wife. The duke de Berri, on part of the king, replied, that he would restore Aquitaine, and give 600,000 crowns with his daughter, a higher portion than had ever yet been granted with a princess of France; but this conciliatory offer was refused, and Henry immediately prepared for war.

Had the young king even been unpopular, this last act would have been sufficient to restore to him the favour of his subjects. The parliament joyfully granted him two-tenths and two-fifteenths; nobles and common men flocked to his standard, war against France was declared, and a message of defiance sent to the dauphin, the ostensible ruler of France. In his preparations for this war, Henry seems to have proceeded with the spirit of a knight preparing for the tournament. He caused three great ships to be

built for him at Southampton, which were decorated with his badge of the swan and antelope, and his haughty motto, "*Une sanz plus ;*" and with that devotional feeling so characteristic of the middle ages, he caused them to be solemnly consecrated by the bishop of Bangor, and named respectively the Trinity, the Grace Dieu, and the Holy Ghost. By loans and pledges of his jewels he raised half a million of nobles, and at length, with fifteen hundred sail, he left Southampton, in August, 1415, entered the Seine, and besieged Harfleur. In actual warfare, as in preparing for it, Henry was still the knight of romance ; he was ever foremost in the conflict, and disdaining all disguise, appeared on the field at Azincourt mounted on his noble grey war-steed, his shining steel helmet encircled by the royal crown, and his tabard blazoned with the arms of France and England. At Azincourt, as at Cressy and Poitiers, the archer-band divided the honour with the knights ; and never did France sustain so disastrous a defeat. According to Monstrelet, the greater part that fell were of gentle birth ; two hundred and twenty banners having been left on the field : while the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, the counts of Eu, Richmond and Artois, were taken prisoners.

Many fruitless negotiations followed this battle, and it was nearly two years ere a truce was concluded with the duke of Burgundy for Flanders and Artois. But this truce brought no relief to France, for bands of robbers, under various standards, but attached to the party of the duke of Burgundy, ravaged the counties of Eu and Aumale. Again Henry col-

lected a numerous army, and, landing at Touques, pressed on to the conquest of Normandy. Meanwhile the duke of Burgundy, who, since his atrocious assassination of the former duke of Orleans, had been viewed with hatred by the queen, the infamous Isabella of Bavaria, received a pressing message from her, praying him to release her from her captivity at Tours. This he effected, and Isabella, in the king's name, sent letters to all the towns that had submitted to the duke, summoning them to her aid. Meanwhile Henry continued his triumphant progress through Normandy, and advanced to Ponte de l'Arche, when, menaced alike by enemies on the east and on the west, Isabella and Burgundy sent proposals of peace. The negotiation lasted fifteen days, and the ambassadors brought with them a portrait of the princess Katherine, "the which," says Monstrelet, "the king liked well." But however pleased he might be with the portrait of his intended bride, Henry would not abate his demands, and the treaty was broken off.

Although Isabella and Burgundy held the supreme rule, Paris still refused them admittance. In the month of June, however, some obscure persons having stolen the city keys, admitted the Burgundians. The tumult that arose sufficiently indicated the ferocious character of the citizens; but the massacre which took place a few days after, when the count d'Armagnac and his partisans—ladies of the noblest birth, as well as knights and gentlemen, were murdered in the streets, to the amount of more than three thousand, can only be paralleled by what the last

century witnessed in the same city, and perpetrated by the same people. The massacre over, Isabella and the duke entered Paris, amid carols and dancing, and received a welcome from partisans well worthy their cause. As Henry was still pushing his conquest in Normandy, and was advancing to the very gates of Paris, again negotiations with the victor were commenced, both by the dauphin and the queen's party; and at length the duke of Burgundy prevailed upon the queen and Henry to meet. A large field on the banks of the Seine, near the gate of Melun, was chosen, where a pavilion, intended for the meeting, and placed at equal distance from the tents of the two kings' nations, was erected by the queen, and presented to Henry. On the appointed day the queen, with the duke of Burgundy, the count St. Pol, and her daughter Katherine, on the one side; and Henry, with his brothers the dukes of Clarence and Gloster, and his uncles the duke of Exeter and the bishop of Winchester, met. The interview was conducted with much pomp, the queen's tent was a fair pavilion of blue velvet, richly embroidered with *fleurs de lis*, and was surmounted with a flying hart of silver. Henry's tent was of blue and green velvet, adorned with figures of antelopes, the one in the strange attitude of drawing in a mill, the other seated above, with a branch of olive in his mouth, and the motto "After busy labour comes triumphant rest;"—a great golden eagle, with diamond eyes, surmounts the gorgeous tent. On the 30th of May, 1418, this interview took place; and about three o'clock the royal personages approached each

other. Henry solemnly bowed to the queen, and "reverently saluted her," and then the princess; his brothers advanced next, "bending one knee *almost* to the ground." Henry then led the queen into the pavilion, "taking the right hand of her," and having placed her in one of the chairs of state, seated himself in the other. The earl of Warwick, one of the most gallant of his nobles, then opened the conference with a speech, addressed to the queen, after which they separated. The interviews and conferences proceeded for more than a month, and at length it was agreed to meet finally, to conclude the peace, on the 3rd of July. At this first interview Isabella had introduced her daughter, hoping to make a deep impression on the mind of the young king; her quick eye soon perceived that this impression was made; and then, vainly trusting that she might compel Henry, by hopes of again seeing her daughter, to yield to the demands of the French party, she would not permit her again to be present. But even if love were strong in the heart of the English king, ambition was stronger; he insisted more firmly on his first proposals, and told the duke of Burgundy that he would have both the princess and his original demands, or drive her father from his throne. The treaty was now broken off, and Henry returned to his more accustomed occupation of besieging towns, in which his usual success still attended him; and the queen, mortified that her project had been so defeated, returned to Paris.

But while Henry expected, only by slow and laborious conquest, to obtain his wishes, the assas-

sination of the duke of Burgundy, by the friends of the dauphin, prepared the way for their immediate attainment; for Isabella issued a proclamation, in the name of her husband, in which, after declaring the dauphin "condemned and accursed by God and by nature, and his own parents,"¹ proffered the regency to Henry. The arrangements for the marriage of Henry with Katherine were now soon completed; but the marriage was delayed for nearly six months. At length, about the middle of May, 1420, Henry arrived at Troyes, where, on the 21st, the celebrated treaty, which gave him the regency of France, and secured the kingdom to his heirs, was signed, and he was then affianced in the church of St. Peter. The marriage was celebrated on the morrow of Trinity, May 30th, in the presence of the emperor Sigismund and several continental princes, "with such great pomp and magnificence, as if he were at that moment king of the whole world." At the time of her marriage, Katherine of France was in her nineteenth year, she having been born October 27th, 1401. Excepting the date of her birth, we can obtain no information respecting her earlier years, while her utter exclusion from public affairs during her life, makes it questionable whether, with her mother's beauty, she also inherited that mother's talents. From her mother's vices, however, she was free; and although we find no act of her short life on which to dwell with commendation, still, that in a daughter of Isabella of Bavaria we should find nothing to condemn, may be considered as praise. The dower of Katherine was fixed at 40,000 crowns,

a sum equal to 10,000 marks, and it seems to have been secured on various manors and castles in England.

The wedding festivities were of very short continuance; from a curious letter, of a person named John Offord, who seems to have been in attendance on the king, we learn that only two days after, Henry removed "to the toun of Sens, having wyth hym thedir owre quene and the frensh estate; and on Wensday was sege layd to that tounne, a greate toun and a notable; the whych toun is worthily beseged, for ther ly at that sege two kynges, two quenes, four dukes, wyth the lorde of Bedford, whan he cometh hedir, and many worthy ladies and gentilwomen be at this sege."* On the taking of this town, Henry proceeded to Melun, which he also besieged; and, until the end of September, he alternated between the camp before that city and Paris. But although engaged in warfare, Henry did not wholly relinquish the amusements of peace, for we find about this time an entry in the Pell Rolls of money paid "for harps for the king and queen;" an entry which corroborates the statement of some of our chroniclers, that he was passionately fond of music. Upon the surrender of Melun, Henry, with his imbecile father-in-law, made his entry into Paris. On this occasion there were "carols and dancing;" and the chief men of the city paid their conqueror the flattering compliment of wearing red, the English royal livery, instead of their accustomed blue; and the two queens made their entry the day after. Still Henry delayed

* *Fœdera*, vol. ix. p. 911.

his visit to England; but at length, on the conclusion of the Christmas festivals, he departed from Paris with his queen and the duke of Bedford, and landed at Dover on the first of February.

On February 23rd, Katherine of France was crowned with great magnificence in Westminster Abbey by archbishop Chicheley, when, according to Monstrelet, there was such pomp and festivity, "that from the time the very noble hero, Arthur, king of the Bretons and English, began to reign, until the present time, nought like it was ever seen in England." Although we may fairly doubt whether this coronation feast was superior in splendour to all before it, that it was conducted with great pomp, we have the testimony of Master Robert Fabyan, who informs us that the queen sate at dinner in the hall, supported on the right by the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Winchester, and on the left by the young king of Scotland*—the earl of March kneeling on the right side of her, holding one sceptre, and the earl marshal on the left, holding another; while the king's youngest brother, the duke of Gloster, stood before her as "overlooker." Thanks to the industry of the same writer, we are provided with a complete bill of fare of this royal feast, from the "brawne and mustarde" of the first course, to the "white leche" of the last. The list is curious, and shows how strictly even the highest class, and on the most important occasions, were at this period obliged to conform to the rules of the church. This feast was held on the third Sunday in Lent, and in

* James the First, who was in captivity here until 1424.

consequence, with the single exception of the "brawne and mustarde," every article not of confectionary, is fish. Strange it certainly does appear, that when dispensations could be obtained for things of far greater moment, one could not have been granted for this occasion. But the church, perhaps, was inexorable; and thus we have a list of full twenty different kinds of fish, among which are barbel, porpoise, and sturgeon, while baked conger, and fried smelts, and fresh salmon, give this ancient bill of fare almost a modern character. The description of the confectionary is very curious—"gely colored wyth columbyne floures;" "leche damaske, wyth the kynges worde '*une sanz plus* ;'" "a marchpane garnysched wyth dyvers aungeles, and an ymage of St. Katherine, holding a reson;" and then the "sotylties," huge and elaborate masses of sugar-work—one displaying a pelican sitting in her nest, and St. Katherine, book in hand, "dysputyng wyth the doctors;" and another of a tiger looking in a mirror, and a man sitting on horseback, armed, holding a tiger's whelp, and "making a countenance of throwyng myrrors at ye great tigre," an enigmatical device sufficient to puzzle the whole company.

During the remainder of Lent, Katherine continued at Westminster, and then, as spring advanced, Henry, with his queen, set out upon a progress to the northern parts of his kingdom. They proceeded first to Coventry, from thence to Kenilworth castle, a place with which Henry had been familiar in his early days, it having belonged to his grandfather, and where it is said he had, with his own hands,

planted an arbour. From hence they proceeded to Leicester, where they kept Easter; and that festival over, they went onward to York. Here the king learnt the sad tidings of the death of his brother, the duke of Clarence, who was killed in a fight with the Scottish mercenaries, at Beaujé, on Easter Sunday; and quitting the queen and her company, he proceeded alone, for devotional purposes, to the shrine of his favourite saint, St. John of Bridlington, and from thence to Beverley and Lincoln. The unfavourable aspect of affairs in France would not allow him now to remain longer in England; and committing the regency to the duke of Bedford, Henry returned in May to France.

From this time to that of the birth of her son, we find no notice respecting Katherine: she most probably continued in seclusion at Windsor castle, where, on December the sixth, Henry was born; and where, as we find by a precept in the *Fœdera*, her churching was celebrated with the accustomed attendance of the nobility. Toward the close of January, we find a precept also in the *Fœdera*, directing vessels to be made ready for the voyage of the queen into France; but from some unknown cause, the voyage did not take place; and it was not until the close of April that Katherine left England with her infant son, whom his father had never yet seen.

After the absence of almost a year, Katherine was met by her husband at Bois de Vincennes, and they soon after entered Paris in state. Here they remained a few weeks, and then Henry, having received a pressing request from the duke of Burgundy to aid

him, took leave of his father and mother-in-law, and wife, at Senlis, and set out on the journey from whence he never returned. He proceeded to Melun, but, unable to mount his horse, was carried in a litter ; he was, however, too ill to review the troops, and therefore returned to Vincennes. Here, after a few days' illness, during which his wife was never summoned, nor even made acquainted with his danger, although only distant a few miles, he breathed his last on the 31st of August, having committed the charge of his kingdom and of his infant son to the duke of Gloster, whom he earnestly prayed to preserve peace with his brother ; and declaring with his last breath, his chivalrous intention, had life been spared, of making war upon the infidels, and rescuing Jerusalem.

The obsequies of this illustrious prince were performed with due honour. The body was conveyed to St. Denis, and from thence to Paris, where it was placed in the church of Notre Dame, previously to its being conveyed to England. On the journey from thence to Rouen, five hundred knights escorted the funeral procession, while three hundred torch and pennon bearers surrounded the hearse. On this, surmounted by a canopy of red silk, lay the effigy of the king, with ball and cross, sceptre and robes of state of the richest texture, while in each district through which the procession passed, the clergy advanced to meet it, and lined the road as it went by. At the distance of a league the queen and her infant son, escorted by the duke of Bedford, followed, and thus the solemn procession advanced to Rouen, from

whence the body was conveyed to England, attended by a numerous fleet.

The sorrow of the people, and especially of the inhabitants of London, at the melancholy news, was unbounded, and they immediately made preparations, as the wardens' books of many a city company show, for celebrating the obsequies of their king with unexampled splendour. The body was landed at Dover, and conveyed in solemn state to London, and here, on the fifth of November, the mayor and aldermen, with fifteen bishops, besides the superiors of the various conventual establishments, proceeded to St. George's, Southwark, where the funeral train met them. The ecclesiastics here took the foremost place, and advanced, chanting the service for the dead; knights, banner-bearers, and taper-bearers, followed the funeral car, which bore the effigy of the deceased monarch, and was drawn by four royally-trapped horses. Behind followed the lord mayor and aldermen, while the members of the city companies, who in deep mourning had lined the streets, took their places in the procession as it approached St. Paul's. Here solemn service was performed, and here the body rested that night. The next morning the long procession again set out, the members of each city company providing a certain number of lighted tapers,* while from St.

* In accounts of the funeral expenses of persons during the middle ages, the reader has probably been often astonished at the large sums paid for wax. In this case the word "taper" has increased the difficulty, since in the modern use of the term a small and slender candle is meant. But during the middle ages tapers were of an enormous size, sometimes weighing *fifty pounds*; and from an entry in the books of the Brewers' Company, relating to this funeral, we find that they provided eight tapers, each weighing eighteen pounds. This was probably the average size of those carried.

Magnus' church to Temple Bar, every householder provided a servant with a lighted torch, which was held at the door until the whole procession had passed. Thus they proceeded to Westminster abbey, where the body was deposited before the high altar; and on the morrow the last rites were performed by the archbishop, and the king's uncle, the bishop of Winchester. At the close of the service, a knight royally attired, and with a crown on his head, advanced to the altar, and offered four steeds, the first, bearing on his trappings the ancient lions of England; the second, England and France, quarterly; the third, France only; the fourth, and it shows how fondly the nation still clung to the fame of her apocryphal king Arthur, the supposed arms of that monarch, the three golden crowns on an azure field. The service was finally concluded by the mourners offering *two hundred* cloths of gold, and then the hero of Azincourt was consigned to the tomb in that chapel which still bears his name. But the affectionate remembrance of the people long survived the funeral solemnities; "even now," says Fabyan, and when he wrote, Tudor wielded the sceptre of the Plantagenets, "as moche honor and reverence is paid daily to hys tumb, as though it were certayn that he was a seynt in Paradis."

Ere the obsequies of the son-in-law were concluded, the imbecile Charles the Sixth was consigned to the tomb, and thus, the sceptres of two of the most important kingdoms of Europe, were laid beside the cradle of an infant not twelve months old! The funeral solemnities of Charles were also conducted

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with great splendour, probably by direction of the regent Bedford; 20,000 lbs. of wax were expended, and 16,000 persons received at the almsgiving three "blancs royal" a piece. At the close of the ceremony, the ushers-at-arms broke their staves, and threw them into the grave, and turned their maces downward; and then the chief king-at-arms cried aloud, "May God show mercy and pity to the soul of the late most puissant and excellent Charles the Sixth, king of France, our natural and sovereign lord; and may God grant a long life to Henry, by the grace of God king of France and England, now our sovereign lord."*

On the meeting of the first parliament of Henry the Sixth an act was passed, securing Katherine full possession of her dower; and during the infancy of her son, she seems to have resided with him at Windsor. Just a twelvemonth after the funeral of his father, the little king was brought by his mother to visit for the first time his good city of London, and to be present at the parliament. According to Fabyan, whose minuteness is always amusing, the journey of young Henry and his mother from Windsor to London occupied three days,—the first, from Windsor to Staines, the next from Staines to Kingston, and finally from Kingston to London, where the queen sitting in her chair, and holding him on her lap, "passed wyth grete triumphe through the city, and so unto Westminster, wher ther was holden hys parliament, and ther sat in hys kyngly majesty wythin the parliament chamber among hys lordes, when the speker made hym a famous preposion." Unfortunately this

* Monstrelet.

"famous preposion" has not been preserved on the rolls of parliament, and we are thus unable to discover the kind of speech, the wisdom of the speaker thought suitable to address to an infant just taken from its cradle.

Shortly after, the young king was transferred from the care of his wet-nurse to that of a governess appointed by the council, the lady Alice Boteler. There is a curious mandate, addressed in the name of the king to her, in the "Proceedings of the privy council," in which, after stating to his "very dear and well-beloved" lady Alice, that "by the advice and assent of our council, judging you to be a person sufficiently skilful and wise, suitable to teach and instruct us," the poor child is made to say, "We therefore grant you license by these presents, reasonably to chastise us from time to time, as the case may require," without being liable to be called to account for such acts in time to come.* It is probable that about the same time, lord Tiptoft was appointed seneschal of the young king's household, and from henceforth, except occasionally, the mother and her son resided separately. In the same year, we find a grant to Katherine of "an hostel in the city of London, which had formerly belonged to the earl of March," of which she was to have possession during the minority of the present owner, the duke of York, on condition of keeping it in repair.† This was Baynard's castle, at this period a splendid mansion, and where, during the wars of the Roses, the duke of York constantly resided when in London.

Although left so young a widow, and with an in-

* Vide vol. iii. p. 143.

† *Fœdera*, vol. x. p. 342.

fant not a twelvemonth old, we find no instance of Katherine's attachment to the child thus thrown so wholly on her care; nor any anxiety to obtain that influence over his mind, which queen-mothers naturally view as their inalienable right. Thus, during the whole first fifteen years of his life, neither the records of the kingdom nor the notices of the chronicles exhibit her as ever interfering in his public, or even private affairs.* It is probable that about this time, or soon after, Katherine contracted her second marriage, and if, as the chronicle of London states, that the births of the four children of that marriage were not known till after her death, it proves that but little intercourse could have taken place between the queen and her son, and that she must have kept at a distance from the court. In April, 1425, she, however, made her public appearance in the city, and in company with the little king. She again came from Windsor, and passed through Westcheap, and proceeded to the west door of St. Paul's, when the lord protector his uncle the duke of Gloster, and his great uncle the duke of Exeter, lifted him out of "the chare, and so was he ledde upon hys feete unto the stepps going into ye quyer, frō whence he was borne unto ye hyghe aulter, and there kneeled;" he was afterwards led to the rood at the north door, and then being carried into the church-yard, was set

* There is one entry on the rolls of parliament which seems an exception to this statement. It is a recommendation to the "queens of Fraunce and yis lande and to my lorde ye regent, to recyve and take up" the question respecting the challenge between the dukes of Gloster and Burgundy. The queens, however, seem to have done nothing in the matter, and it was eventually settled by a council at Paris, called by the regent.

upon "a fayre courser," doubtless a very quiet "pacing horse," and so conveyed through the city to St. George's Bar in Southwark.

The following year, the regent, the duke of Bedford, visited England, and at a solemn feast, held at Windsor, conferred knighthood on the little monarch of five years old. At the same time, the same honour was conferred upon his great foeman in after years, the duke of York, and on thirty-four young noblemen. How little did the most far-sighted of that company foresee the deadly feud that in after years should spring up between these two ill-fated representatives of York and Lancaster; and how many of those who received knighthood with them, should meet an untimely death beneath the banners of the Red and the White Rose!

The young king was now approaching an age which required a severer discipline than that of the lady Alice Boteler, and in the sixth year of his reign, Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick and Almarle, was appointed his tutor. This illustrious nobleman, who seems to have been the "veray parfite gentil knyghte," was born 1381, was created a knight of the Bath at the coronation of Henry the Fourth, and at the coronation of queen Joan, in the spirit of romantic gallantry of those days, he declared himself her champion, and acquitted himself with such spirit in the chivalrous sports that succeeded, that the king retained him for one year with a hundred men-at-arms, and three hundred archers. In the ninth of Henry the Fourth, he set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, passing through

France, where his skill in all chivalrous exercises, but above all, his courtesy, won him universal admiration. During his stay at Jerusalem, his admiring biographer informs us, that he was received with the greatest respect by the Soldan's lieutenant; not merely on account of his own merit, but in honour of his ancestor, the far-famed Guy of Warwick, whose wondrous story it seems had travelled even to the land of the East. Returning by a different route, and after displaying his skill and prowess in several tournaments, this valiant earl now entered into the service of prince Henry, by whom, on his accession to the throne, he was appointed high steward, and soon afterward, one of the commissioners to treat for the marriage of the king with Katherine. He was also one of the lay assistants at the council of Constance, and in all the wars in France he greatly distinguished himself; while by his many brilliant qualities he became so celebrated throughout Europe, that the emperor Sigismund, as his admiring biographer relates, declared to Henry the Fifth, "that no prince Xysten, for wisdom, nurture, and manhood, had such an other knyghte, as he had of the earl of Warrewyke; addynge thereto, that if al courtesye were lost, yet might hit be found agayn in hym. And so ever after, by the emperour's auctoryte, he was called *the fader of courtesye*."

To this illustrious nobleman Henry on his death-bed committed the education of his son, until he should attain the age of sixteen years, and the instrument* which appoints the earl to this important office, bears public

* *Fœdera*, vol. x. p. 399.

testimony to his "fidelity, wisdom, circumspection, and diligence," it directs that the young king shall be instructed in "generous habits, cheerful manners, in literature, and liberal and other useful learning." He was also directed to exhort him truly to serve God, follow virtue, abhor vice; and finally, the same permission was extended to the earl as to the lady Boteler, that he might, at his discretion, "reasonably chastize" the young monarch. It is remarked by sir John Fortescue, that under the earl of Warwick's superintendence, the court of the young Henry resembled a university; and from an order of council dated as early as 1425, we find it ordained, that "the heirs of all lords, not below the rank of barons, holding of the king *in capite*, and being his wards in consequence of their minority, shall remain about his person, with one master each, at the king's expense." An admirable arrangement, which provided for young Henry the advantages of a public education, combined with those of a private one, but which unhappily, in his case, were all in vain.

From this time the young king appears to have had a regular establishment, and we find him giving and receiving new-year's gifts, as was customary with the English sovereigns down to the days of the Stuarts. Among the gifts received by him, in this, the earliest list, is a gold basin and ewer from Katherine, the queen; and among the Christmas disbursements we find 100*s.* largesse to the heralds, ten nobles to the minstrels; while the following,— "to Jakke Travail and his company for interludes before the king, 4*l.*;" to Jervis of Abingdon, for

similar amusements, 40s.; "to Robert Atkinson, for carrying the *portable organ* from Windsor to Eltham, 10s."—show that the little king was allowed those amusements which belong to childhood.*

Although Henry had now reigned more than seven years, his coronation, that ceremony which was considered of such indispensable importance by our forefathers, was still delayed—a sure proof how secure the council believed young Henry's title to the throne to be. But the state of affairs in France, probably induced the regent at length to make arrangements for the coronation of his nephew there. The dauphin had been crowned at Rheims by the hands of Joan of Arc, and the coronation of Henry, as king both of France and England, could therefore no longer wisely be deferred.

His coronation as king of England first took place; and on the 6th of November, Henry was solemnly crowned in Westminster by archbishop Chicheley. The banquet which followed is minutely described by Fabian, and it certainly far surpassed in splendour that which graced Katherine's coronation. Cygnet, heron, "bores hedes in castles of golde enarmed," peacock, "a bake-meate lyke a shield quartered red and whyte," are some of the delicacies; and there was "custarde royal, with a leopard of golde syttinge therein holdynge a flour de luce;" "gely" adorned with "*Te Deum*," musical notes and all; while the "sotylties" were splendid. The first represented St. Louis and St. Edward with the young king between them, and a "balade," pray-

* *Fœdera*, vol. x. p. 387.

ing that he might resemble these saintly monarchs. The second exhibited the emperor Sigismund and Henry the Fifth, each wearing the mantle of the garter, and young Henry kneeling before them, while the verses annexed celebrated the emperor for his acts against "miscreaunts," and Henry the Fifth, because he "cherished the church, to lollers gave a fall," and thereby giving his son an example to do likewise. The exhibition of such a "sotyltie," on such an occasion, proves how bitter the feeling of those in authority was against the Lollards, and it also proves how formidable they had already become. The third displayed "our ladye" seated, with her son in her lap, and holding a crown. St. George and St. Denis supported the young king, who knelt before her, while the verses prayed "our ladye," and St. George "that called art her knyghte," with St. Denis, to watch over the young king, who, both by title and right, was called "justly to regne in Englande and in Fraunce."

A full twelvemonth passed ere the young king's second coronation took place; but at the end of November 1430, accompanied by his tutor, his uncle the regent, and his great-uncle the bishop of Winchester, now cardinal of St. Eusebius, young Henry, escorted by three thousand men-at-arms, arrived midway between St. Denis and Paris, and was there met by the provost and burghers, accompanied by a pageant of the nine worthies, and conducted into the city. The shows which celebrated his arrival were singularly childish; perhaps a covert reflection on the childhood of the king. Three

hearts were presented to him at the gate, one of them containing a pair of doves, and another, a number of live birds; a *real* stag was hunted through the streets, and a man engaged in the homely occupation of sowing seed, excited, according to Monstrelet, general admiration.

On this occason, all the burghers wore crimson satin doublets and blue hoods, in honour of the king. But although every respect seems to have been paid him by his French subjects, the conduct of his advisers was ill calculated to conciliate them. When Henry was crowned at Notre Dame, his uncle, the cardinal, placed the crown on his head : this might, perhaps, be excused on the ground of the cardinal's superior ecclesiastical rank ; but he also chose to chant the mass, at which, Monstrelet says, the bishop of Paris was much displeased, "for he said that office belonged of right to him." At the offertory, the wine, which was in a large silver vessel, was seized by the king's officers as their perquisite, while the canons claimed it as theirs ; and though their claim was eventually allowed, they incurred great expense in pursuing it. All the ceremonies of the coronation were performed rather in the English than the French manner, and at the banquet three English lords represented the three peers of France. After a few days' stay, the young king quitted his "good city of Paris," never again to return to it, and retired to Rouen, where he continued with the earl of Warwick more than a year.

In February 1432, Henry returned to England ; and the joy expressed by all classes, and the splendid

pageants which the citizens prepared to welcome him, prove how strong was the attachment of the people to the son of Henry the Fifth. But there were other feelings which were gratified by his return: that little child was the only monarch of the race of Plantagenet,—indeed, the only monarch of England, who had ever been *crowned* king of France. So long accustomed to victory, our forefathers would not believe that all the conquests of the father were being rapidly lost by the son, and they hailed his actual inauguration in the French capital, as a pledge of his full sovereignty over the whole kingdom. And thus, with a pride and exultation which, viewed in connection with after-events, are mournful, did they hail his return. When he approached the bridge, “a myghté géaunte” promised to be ever aiding, and to bear down all who opposed him; at the drawbridge, “dame Nature” promised him strength and beauty, “dame Grace” endued him with “science and conninge,” while “dame Fortune,” even more vainly, promised the unconscious boy, wealth, prosperity, and a long life,—three possessions never to be enjoyed by Henry of Windsor.

The description of his entry is given at full length by Fabyan; and, on the whole, it must have been a magnificent spectacle. There were none of those incongruities which the pageants of the Tudors’ days displayed, when saints and goddesses, the three Graces, and Faith, Hope and Charity danced together, and when Julius Cæsar, Joshua, and the reigning king formed a triumvirate of heroes. Here, fourteen young maidens, having “garments powdered wyth

starres of golde," welcomed the young king into "your owne newe Troye" with "a roundel of an heavenly melodie," and a beautiful boy, crowned like a king, and supported by Mercy and Truth, stood in Cornhill; and a fair grove rose beside the great conduit in Westcheap, with three fountains, in honour of the lord mayor, whose name was Welles, and at these Mercy, Grace, and Pity ministered with golden cups, and the water changed to wine as the king drew near. Then, two venerable old men, representing Enoch and Elias, came forth, and invoked blessings on the young monarch's head, and prayed the unanswered prayer, "in enemye's hands that he myghte never fall." "A celestial throne and aungells" was placed beside the lesser conduit; and when the procession reached the east gate of St. Paul's, the whole body of the London clergy, with cross and banners, and the archbishop at their head, welcomed him with hymns of thanksgiving. After making his offerings in the cathedral, young Henry proceeded to Westminster, where "*Te Deum*" was sung, while he knelt before St. Edward's shrine, and then retired to the palace.

During all this time we find no notice whatever of Katherine; she does not even appear to have been present as spectatress at either coronation; nor from her son's return from France, to her death, five years after, have we any information respecting her. Her private marriage with Owen Tudor took place probably some years before this period; but of the circumstances of his introduction to the queen, the date of her marriage, or even whether it was suspected

by the court,—for it would seem that it was not absolutely known until after her death,—we are wholly ignorant.* Of Owen Tudor himself little is known, except that he was an esquire of obscure birth, but distinguished for personal beauty, and, according to Holinshed, “a gallant gentleman, indued with many goodly gifts both of person and mind:” that he was also fierce and daring we have sufficient evidence, he having on two occasions, after the queen’s death, broken out of Newgate, and in one instance severely wounded the keeper. He was at length suffered to be at large, and he retired to Wales, where, in 1450, he was made keeper of the king’s parks; and after fighting bravely for his son-in-law, he was taken at Wigmore, in a skirmish, by sir Thomas Vaughan, a Yorkist, and being brought to Hereford, was there beheaded.

Some time before her death, on what account we cannot ascertain, Katherine retired to the abbey of Bermondsey. As this wealthy establishment was for monks of the Clugniac order, and as at this period so many noble female convents offered a more

* In the minutes of the privy council, 15th July, 1437, we find that the king, after the death of his mother, “wylled that one Oweyn Tidler, the whych dwelt wyth her, sholde come to hym.” This, it appears, he refused, unless it were promised that he should “freely come and freely go.” The promise was given by a king’s messenger, but because it was not in writing, he “ful secretwyse” came to London, and put himself in the sanctuary at Westminster, and there remained for some time. Afterward he came to the king, and affirmed that he had given him “no maner of offense,” and offered to defend himself and “abide al laweful aunswer.” He was, however, committed to prison; and the council debated whether his detention could be justified, seeing that the king had given him promise of freedom. They decided that it could be. It would seem from this, that the council were not acquainted with the marriage until after Katherine’s death.—Vide “Acts of the Privy Council,” vol. iv. p. 46.

fitting asylum for a queen-dowager, it seems very unlikely that she should have chosen this abbey of her own free will. Perhaps information of her marriage, although not publicly known, might have reached the council, and fearful of their displeasure, especially that of the most powerful of their number, the duke of Gloster, she placed herself under the immediate protection of his bitter enemy, cardinal Beaufort, who, as bishop of Winchester, exercised episcopal jurisdiction over the abbey of Bermondsey. This, however, is only conjectural; and all we know is, that she died here, on the 3rd of January, 1437. Her friendly relation with the king her son continued, however, to his death; for in the list of his new-year's gifts for this year, we find the entry of "to ye quene, at Bermondsey, a tablet of golde, wyth a cross sette wyth sapphires and pearl."

Katherine was buried at Westminster; her body having been carried with "due solempnitie," according to Fabyan, through the city. According to the same authority, she was interred in the midst of the Lady-Chapel, under a tomb of marble; but when her grandson, in preparing the site for his own chapel, caused that building to be demolished, the coffin was carried into Henry the Fifth's chapel, and there interred. This coffin many years after was again exhumed, and placed on the floor, where, until within the last fifty years, it exhibited to the passer-by the decaying bones of the once beautiful Katherine of France. It is now replaced in the vault.

By her second marriage Katherine left four children; three sons, and a daughter who died in infancy.

Whatever hostility was exhibited by the council against the husband, no feeling but that of kindness was shown toward the children. Soon after the queen's death, the two eldest, whose names in the Pell Rolls are described as Edmund ap Meredith ap Tydier, and Jasper ap Meredith ap Tydier, were consigned to the care of Katherine de la Pole, abbess of Barking, who received the sum of 100*l.* a-year for their board, a sum which recognised their rank as nobles ; while the youngest, who became a monk in the abbey of Westminster, was probably brought up there. On completing their education, Edmund and Jasper were welcomed with brotherly kindness at the king's court. In 1452, the eldest received the title of earl of Richmond, and the younger that of earl of Pembroke. Richmond, who married the celebrated Margaret Beaufort, died early ; but Pembroke survived through all the changeful fortunes of the wars of the Roses, to see the crown which his half-brother had worn, placed on the brow of Richmond's only son, Henry Tudor.

MARGARET OF ANJOU.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Contests between Cardinal Beaufort and the Duke of Gloster—Gradual Loss of France—Negotiations for the King's Marriage—Margaret's Parentage—Preparations for her Arrival—Her Marriage—Death of the Duke of Gloster—Remarks—Margaret founds Queen's College—Suffolk murdered—Cade's Insurrection—York comes forward—Is appointed Protector—Birth of Prince Edward—Commencement of the War—York appointed Heir to the Crown—Battle of Wakefield—Of St. Alban's—Of Towton—Margaret proceeds to France—Returns with Troops—Escapes to Flanders—Retires to her Father's Duchy—King René—Sir John Fortescue—Becomes reconciled to Warwick—Returns to England—Battle of Tewkesbury—Death of her Son and King Henry—Is Imprisoned—Released by Louis the Second—Retires to France—Her Death.

IT had been well both for the infant Henry and for England, had the life of his chivalrous father been lengthened out until that son, heir to two mighty but hostile kingdoms, had arrived at manhood. But, snatched so suddenly away, in the flower of his age, and while yet pressing on to new conquests, Henry of Monmouth bequeathed to that unconscious child a deadly legacy of foreign strife, and, more disastrous still, of civil war, which deluged our land with blood, and eventually consigned that son to captivity and death. The history of all regencies present similar features of strife and rivalry; but the regency, during the minority of Henry

the Sixth, was especially marked by the most bitter contests for power between uncle and nephew, which ceased not even with their deaths, but which, by opening a way for the pretensions of the house of York, ended in the ruin of the proud line of Plantagenet.

On the death of Henry the Fifth, his next brother, the duke of Bedford, contrary it would seem, to the wishes of the dying monarch, was appointed protector and defender of the kingdom; while, during his necessary absence in France, the duke of Gloster, the king's youngest brother, was to fill that office. At this arrangement Gloster was most indignant, for he asserted that the regency had been confirmed to him by the dying lips of the king, and from henceforth he viewed his uncle, Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, as the enemy to whom he owed his exclusion from supreme power. On the other hand, Beaufort, who seems never to have been on friendly terms with Gloster, took every opportunity of opposing him; and ere three years had passed, the contest between uncle and nephew had become so violent, that the duke of Bedford was summoned from France to mediate between them. By advice of the lords of the council, a parliament was held at Leicester, where, after much recrimination, a hollow peace was concluded; Gloster assuring his "beal uncle" that he believed him to have been "trew man to the king, and so had been to the king hys fader and brother;" and Beaufort praying Gloster to be to him "from this time forth gode friend:" and whereupon Gloster replied, "Beal uncle, sithen ye

so declare you such a man as you say, I am ryghte glad yat hit is so, and for such I take you;" and then, "in token and prooffe of fulle and sad love and affection to be hadde and kepte," they took each other by the hand.* The next day Beaufort resigned the seals as chancellor, and some time after accompanied the duke of Bedford to Calais, where he received that great object of his ambition for which he had waited ever since the council of Constance, the cardinal's hat; and he was consecrated to the office at Calais, by the title of cardinal of St. Eusebius.

Meanwhile the aspect of affairs in France suddenly, and as by miracle, changed. The visionary peasant girl, who beside the fountain of the faëries, and in the hermitage of the Virgin, had dreamed of St. Michael, and St. Katherine, and St. Margaret, appeared with a message of encouragement before the French king, placed herself at the head of his discomfited troops, and led them from victory to victory. Orleans, Troyes, Chalons, Rheims, opened their gates; and while the French soldiers exulted in the guidance of one who was commissioned by the archangel Michael himself, to restore the French monarchy, the English troops became paralysed at the approach of Joan, affirming that although they feared no mortal man, they dared not attack fiends of hell.† During these reverses, the duke of Burgundy continued the stedfast ally of England; and

* Vide Parl. Rolls, vol. iv. p. 296—299.

† Vide the duke of Bedford's letter in the *Fœdera*, vol. x. p. 438, where he calls Joan "a discyple and lymbe of the fyende, that used false enchauntments and sorcerye."

after that the unhappy Joan had ended her mission and her life, English prowess might perhaps have retained its still remaining possessions, had not the duke of Bedford, on the death of his wife, a sister of the duke of Burgundy, precipitately formed a second alliance with Jacquetta of Luxemburg, daughter of the count St. Pol. The news of this marriage enraged the duke of Burgundy; for Jacquetta was daughter of one of his vassals, and his consent had not even been sought. It was in vain that cardinal Beaufort, who was a profound statesman, and who foresaw the danger of Burgundy returning to his former allegiance, laboured to effect a reconciliation: the dukes met, but could not be prevailed upon even to speak to each other, and an attempt to bring about a general pacification, seemed now the best course for English policy to pursue. This was most distasteful to the nation, and it was strenuously opposed by the duke of Gloster, who was unceasing in his opposition to every measure advocated by his ancient enemy, whom a short time before, and during his absence in France, he had charged with having obtained a bull from the pope of exemption from the diocese of Canterbury, and thereby incurred the penalties of premunire. This attempt to injure Beaufort was counteracted by the parliament; but from henceforth they met at the council table, pledged to oppose each other's measures.

The long-continued war of France and England excited the sorrow of the pontiff, and, not improbably at the suggestion of Beaufort, he recommended that a congress should be held, to take measures

toward a general pacification. The congress of Arras, in 1435, was the result of this proposition, and thither the cardinal, with many of the nobles, proceeded; but here his hopes of an honourable peace were blighted by the extravagant demands which the English envoys were directed by the council to make. Rejecting the offer of Normandy and Guienne, subject to the feudal superiority of France, an offer which had sufficed for the ambition of the first Plantagenet, they actually, with more than half of France in arms against him, demanded that Henry should still be acknowledged as its king; and Beaufort and the envoys returned, with sorrowful forebodings, from a congress which bade fair, while the breach was widened between the two nations, to reconcile the most important ally of England, the duke of Burgundy, with his deadly enemy the king of France. The negotiations ended as had been feared;—peace between France and Burgundy was concluded in September: and when the news reached England, the rage of the nation knew no bounds. In London, the common people rose upon the Flemings, the council refused to hold any communication with the duke, and his envoys were dismissed. Ere the anger excited by this unexpected event had subsided, the duke of Bedford died, and Gloster thus obtained the supreme rule, although the young king having nearly attained his majority, his title was only that of chief counsellor.

Determined to prosecute the war in France with vigour, Gloster sent over the duke of York, whom, with a fatal pertinacity, he now on every occasion

put forward, while cardinal Beaufort was equally anxious to advance his nephew the young earl of Somerset ; and for four years the war was carried on, at vast expense of troops and money:—surely the impolicy of continuing so ruinous a contest ought to have been manifest to the lords of the council, since even had there been a second Henry of Monmouth to lead the army, and even had the duke of Burgundy continued firm to his alliance, how could the smaller country keep in subjection one more than double its size, and its equal in power and knowledge? But the popular mind, dazzled by the glories of the former reign, could not be persuaded to relinquish their hopes of the ultimate conquest of France ; and it is probable that to his strenuous support of this darling measure, duke Humphrey of Gloster, rather than to any other cause, owes his title of the “ Good.” Haughty, impetuous, a soldier by profession and choice, it is not improbable that the duke might sincerely persuade himself that national honour was pledged to the subjugation of France ; while the wary and more clear-sighted cardinal, whose life had been passed in courts and councils, saw that every additional year of warfare would be dearly purchased by ultimate disgrace. That cardinal Beaufort was grasping and ambitious, and actuated by deadly hatred toward Gloster, may be conceded ; but there is no proof that he had not the honour and welfare of England at heart, fully as much as those who, with an exhausted exchequer and a discontented people, still clamoured for the continuance of a sanguinary and ruinous war.

The consequences of the war with Burgundy were soon found to be more injurious to English commerce than war with, perhaps, any other state; and it seems to have been this consideration that induced the lords of the council to send the cardinal in 1439 to the marches of Calais, to negotiate a peace with Isabella, wife of the duke of Burgundy, who had offered to become mediatrix between France and England.* Her efforts were powerfully seconded by the cardinal, but equally opposed by Gloster; and little beyond concluding a temporary suspension of hostilities was effected. Meanwhile, it was proposed that the duke of Orleans, who had undergone a confinement of twenty-four years in England, should be liberated, on condition of his pledging himself to use his utmost exertions to conclude a peace. Gloster opposed this vehemently, but the arguments of the cardinal prevailed, and Orleans was freed;† but on the day that he publicly swore in Westminster Abbey never to bear arms against England, Gloster, immediately that the mass began, “took to his barge,” and remained there. Still the negotiations continued; the English still forced to relax in their demands, and the French each time diminishing their concessions, until Henry had passed his twentieth year, and it was thought necessary to make arrangements for his marriage. Again Gloster and Beaufort

* She was the grand-daughter of John of Gaunt, by her mother the queen of Portugal, and allied to France by her marriage with duke Philip, and thus well qualified by her relationship as well as by her talents for the office. The negotiations may be seen at great length in the *Fœdera*, vol. x.

† According to Dr. Lingard, *this* was the grand struggle; for the council were equally divided, and they laid their respective arguments before the king; when he decided in favour of the liberation of Orleans.

keenly fought for the mastery; for the son of the valiant Henry had grown up a gentle, timid, and affectionate, but weak-minded being, over whom, whoever he was attached to, would necessarily exercise the most commanding influence. In this strife Gloster prevailed, and, in May 1442, bishop Beckington and two colleagues were appointed to negotiate a marriage between the king and the daughter of the count of Armagnac, which, it was hoped, might avail as a protection to Guienne. But the hope was vain: on the arrival of Charles in the neighbourhood, the inhabitants joyfully returned to their former allegiance, and the count was compelled to break off the treaty.

Ere these negotiations were broken off, the duke of Gloster, in the person of his wife, received the severest insult. Elinor Cobham, that wife, who, although the daughter of a nobleman, cannot take rank among "honourable women," was as distinguished in her youth for beauty as profligacy, and after being mistress to several noblemen, at length became the mistress of Gloster. She accompanied him to Flanders, when he went to aid the cause of his first wife, Jacqueline of Hainault; and this public defiance of correct feeling induced the "ladies of London," with lady Stokes at their head, to petition parliament respecting the conduct of the duke, and to pray them to afford their aid to the unhappy Jacqueline.* When the pope dissolved Gloster's first marriage, Elinor Cobham became his second wife, and to her he appears to have been strongly attached; but in accordance with the superstition of the day, fearing

* Vide Stowe.

lest with advancing years her influence over him should cease, she employed "a right learned clerk," as we learn from her confession, to compose magical potions, which should ensure the continuance of his affection. Whether, seduced by the desire to look into futurity, she also endeavoured by the same futile means to ascertain how long the king should live, we know not; but Roger Bolingbroke, whom William Wyrcestre describes as a most learned man, and who was the duke's chaplain, was accused of necromancy, and the duchess thereupon fled to the sanctuary at Westminster. She appears to have been taken from thence, and on being confronted with Bolingbroke, he declared that she instigated him to the study of magic. Bolingbroke, with a priest named Southwell, were tried for treason, in endeavouring by magic to compass the king's death; and he was first exhibited in St. Paul's churchyard, "clothed in garments of necromancy, with his instruments and waxen images," and afterwards executed; while the duchess, with her coadjutrix, Margery Jourdain, who had been some years before in custody on charge of magical practices, were arraigned before the ecclesiastical court; when the woman was sentenced to be burnt, and the duchess, after public penance for three days, to be consigned to perpetual imprisonment. In consequence, hoodless and bearing a lighted taper, the duchess walked on the one day from the Temple church to St. Paul's; on another, from the Swan in Thames-street to Cree-church; and on the Saturday, from St. Paul's to St. Peter's, Cornhill,* from whence she was sent to

* William Wyrcestre, p. 461. The specific charge against her, according to Fabyan, was, "for making an image of wax like unto ye

a distant part of the kingdom.* The duke was not implicated in these proceedings; but the degradation of his wife must have severely wounded his feelings; the more so, as although Beaufort does not prominently appear, there seems little doubt that he took an important part in her conviction, as chief of the ecclesiastical courts. Gloster, however, neither retired from the court nor gave up his political station; and when the council determined to send aid to Bayonne, now menaced by the advancing arms of Charles, he offered to become security for the king, in raising the necessary supplies, to any amount.

Again, in February 1444, overtures for peace were made, and de la Pole, the earl of Suffolk, was appointed ambassador. This office he very unwillingly undertook, for, from his expressed wish for peace, the people had accused him of being favourable to the French interest. Most of our popular historians have asserted, that Suffolk's instructions extended only to a negotiation for peace, and that the proposals for the king's marriage originated with himself. This is, however, disproved by the letters patent, which expressly state his instructions to be "the obtaining a good peace, and our marriage."† To the proposals for peace, Charles gave but unwilling attention, and Suffolk could only obtain a suspension of hostilities for two years: with the proposal for the king's mar-

kyng, ye whych image they dealt so with (by slowly melting it) that they intended to bring out of life by little and little the kyng's person."

* From some entries in the Issue Rolls, we find that she was first committed to Chester, and afterwards to Kenilworth: a priest, a waiting-maid, three gentlemen, five valets, and two pages, formed her suite; and for her personal expenses one hundred marks yearly were paid.

† *Fœdera*, vol. xi. p. 53.

riage he was more successful, for the offer was immediately clutched at by the uncle and father of the portionless bride, and assent was immediately given.

Margaret, the princess chosen, was the eldest daughter of René duke of Anjou, and Isabel, daughter and heiress of the duke of Lorraine, and is stated to have been born in 1425. Her father, in lofty expectations and severe reverses, seems the prototype of the daughter; for, succeeding, in 1430, his father-in-law the duke of Lorraine, his succession was disputed by count Vaudemont, and being vanquished, he was kept six years in captivity, until at length he was liberated at the request of the king of France, who had married his sister. He soon after succeeded his elder brother as duke of Anjou, and having been appointed heir, by queen Joan, of the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, to which was added the title of king of Jerusalem, he proceeded to Naples in 1443 to be crowned. Here, after only a few months of royal state, he was besieged by Alfonso king of Arragon, who gained possession of Naples by treason, and René with difficulty escaped to Lorraine, where he lived almost a dependant on the bounty of his brother-in-law. With the circumstances which first induced the council to propose this marriage we are wholly unacquainted, nor can we gain much authentic information respecting that cession of the counties of Anjou and Maine which so exasperated the popular mind: this much is certain, that Suffolk proceeded to France, charged with proposals for the king's marriage; and, to use the words of sir Harris Nicholas, "as in respect to the king's marriage,

Suffolk did not act without authority, it is reasonable to infer that he had also the necessary powers for accomplishing that object upon those terms, which were afterwards made the grounds of his impeachment."

The great anxiety which the council felt to obtain peace with France, was probably the primary reason for this alliance; and they hoped that by marrying the young king to a niece of the king of France,—a niece, too, to whom he was strongly attached,—an end might at length be put to a war which had brought the king to the verge of ruin, and had compelled him to pledge nearly all the crown jewels. The necessities of the king are, indeed, forcibly set forth in a letter addressed, apparently during the summer, to commissioners who were appointed to raise money throughout the kingdom by loan. This states, that as he has been provided with "a quene of a highe and noble birth, gretely endowed with the giftes of grace and of nature; and forasmoche as it is not according to the kinge's worship, nor to his herte's ease, that the coming of hir into his lande be longe tarryed or delayed;" and as, moreover, "the grete and importable charges that the king hath long time borne, namely, for the werre and defence of his lande, have gretely barred him of his tresor, and ready goode;" the king "prayeth right hertily the saide commissioners, as they love and tendre the worship and welfare of the king, and in especial of his realme, that they wol shewe unto him in his necessity their affection and goode wille."* The high terms in which the future

* Acts of the Privy Council, vol. vi. p. 323.

queen is here alluded to were no mere compliment ; for Margaret of Anjou, according to the testimony even of historians the most opposed to her, was equal in beauty, and even at this early age, superior in mind, to any princess of Europe. Nor, in point of station, could she be considered at all inferior to Henry. Surely, if Mary of Anjou had been deemed a fitting wife for the king of France, Margaret of Anjou, her niece, whose father was actually a crowned king, although driven from his possessions, was an equally suitable bride for the king of England. But the necessities of the country demanded a queen with a portion, and, therefore, when it was discovered that not merely did Margaret possess no fortune, but that Anjou and Maine, on the plea that a son-in-law could not with propriety keep from his wife's father his hereditary dominions, were to be restored, the anger of the nation knew no bounds, and Suffolk was loudly clamoured against, for having sold the honour of England. To satisfy his prophetic forebodings, an instrument, signed by the king and approved by the parliament, was prepared,* which pardoned beforehand every supposed error of judgment into which he might fall, and, accompanied by the countess of Shrewsbury and a large suite of knights and ladies, Suffolk set out for France.

Here, we learn from Monstrelet that he was received right joyfully, and, in October, as proxy for the king, he received the hand of Margaret at Nancy. Tournaments graced these nuptials, and the feasts lasted eight days ; but, instead of immediately pro-

* *Fœdera*, vol. xi. p. 53.

ceeding to England, it was not until the following spring that Margaret set out. The reason of this singular delay was probably the exhausted state of the king's exchequer; for, from some curious precepts in the *Fœdera*, we find that Henry had to wait until his commissioners had raised supplies by loan, ere he could obtain 2000 marks for his "most best beloved wief the quene, for hir coming now unto oure presence," and 2000 more for a "jewel of St. George, lately bought."* As soon, however, as the necessary supplies were received, the embassy with the queen set out on their return to England, the kings of France and Sicily escorting Margaret "two leagues from Nancy, where the king of France took his leave of her with many tears, commending her to the protection of God: indeed, their grief was so great that they could not speak. Then the king returned; but her father accompanied her as far as Bois-le-Duc, where he and her mother took leave of her with floods of tears, and prayers for her welfare." A singularly prophetic parting!

Early in April, Margaret arrived in England, when, as we learn from a letter of Henry, she immediately fell "syke of ye labor and indisposition of ye see," and the marriage was postponed until the close of the

* Vide *Fœdera*. In January, "a ryng of golde, garnished with a faire rubey," which had been given to the king on the day of his coronation at Paris by cardinal Beaufort, was sent to a goldsmith "to break, and thereof to make another ryng for the quene's wedding-ryng." Even as early as November, Henry seems to have been expecting his bride; for, in a letter of that date addressed to the Goldsmiths' Company, he says he "trusts to have oure entirely wel-beloved wife the quene wythin ryght brief time," and he therefore desires that they "wol prepare to meet her in most goodly wise." They accordingly prepared and arrayed themselves most bravely, with "bauderiks of gold: about theyr necks, and short hoods of scarlette jagged."

month, when, probably from her inability to travel, she was married, on April 22nd, at Southwick in Hampshire. About three weeks after, she was conveyed with great pomp to London, to her coronation ; the livery companies meeting her at Blackheath, and accompanying her into the city, "where," says Fahyan, "for her were ordained sumptuous and costly pageants, and resemblances of divers histories, to the grete comfort of her, and such as came with her." During the interval between her arrival and coronation, Margaret seems to have resided at the Tower, and from thence, on the 30th of May, she rode to Westminster, where she was crowned by Stafford, archbishop of Canterbury. The coronation feasts seem to have been splendid: 1000*l.* was assigned for the office of chief butler alone, and many valuable crown jewels were redeemed for the express purpose of being presented to the beautiful Margaret at the "tyme of ye solempnytie of her coronation," among which were the "Ilkyngton coler," a most costly gift ; a "pectoral," richly adorned with gems, for which the king had just before paid a sum equal to 15,000*l.*, was also given her. Jousts were held in the court-yard of the Abbey sanctuary ; and the people, gratified probably by the shows and feasting, departed, as we are told by contemporary chroniclers, well satisfied.

For the splendours of the coronation feasts, even at a time when the king was so necessitous, an excuse may easily be found ; but when we read, in the *Fœdera* and the *Issue Roll* of this year, of "rewards" bestowed on each person who accompanied the queen,

from the countess of Shrewsbury even to the master of the vessel which conveyed her to England, besides those bestowed on her foreign suite, we perceive that the marriage of the king was viewed as the triumph of a party, and can scarcely be surprised that such injudicious and lavish expenditure, strengthened the unfriendly feeling toward her.

At the meeting of parliament in June, the speaker, "in most humble and tendre wise," recommended to the king's favour the marquess of Suffolk, and in an elaborate eulogy, described his loyal and valiant conduct both abroad and at home as being most deserving some mark of approbation; but, "above all, the grete devoirs and diligences in the king's marriage to the most noble and famous princess, our sovereign lady quene." Upon this, "my lord of Gloster and divers lords" arose from their seats, and humbly besought the king to show his especial favour to one who was already chief favourite; and the king with great good will gave his gracious assent to an act which decreed that to Suffolk's "trew acquittance and discharge, and honor of him in time to come," his declarations of his conduct in this affair should be entered on the Rolls.* Of what little avail this twice-repeated acquittal was, after years solemnly showed.

It is here that one of the many problems in this portion of our history meets us. The writers who are most generally quoted, agree in representing the duke of Gloster as most indignant at all the arrangements of this marriage; and yet we find him, on the

* Parl. Rolls, vol. v. p. 73.

incontrovertible testimony of the Parliament Rolls, actually taking the lead in petitioning for the king's grace and favour toward Suffolk. Did he really approve that nobleman's conduct? and if so, he must have approved the cession of Maine and Anjou; for even if the commons were at this time ignorant of it, the duke, as a lord of the council, could not have been. Or was he cherishing plans against the government, as his enemies afterwards charged upon him, and therefore assumed the mask of friendship toward Suffolk, the better to conceal his real intentions? In the same parliament, an act for providing for the queen's dower was passed, which fixed it at five thousand marks, or 3666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, only half the sum which had been assigned to the preceding queen.

Of the first two years after Margaret's marriage we unfortunately possess scarcely a single record, and we therefore are wholly ignorant of the conduct pursued by her toward the duke of Gloster. That she soon gained a complete ascendancy over the mind of the king is very likely, for beauty and talents as commanding as those of Margaret of Anjou might have secured her influence over a far stronger mind; but we have no reason to believe that she set Henry against his uncle, for the influence which Gloster probably at one period possessed over his nephew had been undermined by cardinal Beaufort long before Margaret set foot on the land. That she patronised Suffolk is not astonishing: to him she owed her crown, and common gratitude would lead her, a stranger—and more, an unloved stranger,—to look

with especial kindness on the statesman who had not merely raised her to her present high station, but who was enduring so much popular obloquy for her sake.* But however injudicious, although perfectly natural, the bestowal of such accumulated honours on Suffolk might be, still it should be remembered, that this "minion of France," as she has been called, did not summon over a herd of needy relations to batten on the spoils of England, nor surround herself with a host of foreign domestics. In all the charges made against her,—and scarcely any queen was more bitterly pursued by censure,—we never find these: her suite, even in after years, when driven from England, appears always to have consisted of English women; she early became familiar with our language, she seems on all occasions to have adopted English customs, nor in any of her troubles did she ever seek aid from France, except when her own bold yeomanry were dead or flying.

During this period we find but few notices of the duke of Gloster; he seems to have taken little part in public affairs, and for this we may easily find a reason, without believing, with Hall, that it was in consequence of Margaret's taking on herself high authority; having been urged by her father not to suffer herself and her husband to be kept under, "lyke yong wardes and desolate orphanes;" since, to a mind haughty as his own, the various attacks of his enemies, and the captivity of his wife, would supply

* It is scarcely necessary to remark upon the gross historical errors which Shakspeare's three plays of Henry VI. present; and yet it is from these, even more than from popular history, that the general opinion respecting both Margaret of Anjou and Suffolk is formed.

ample reasons for his withdrawal from the court. Whether he was actually plotting against the government, or whether his enemies charged him falsely, we have no means of deciding; but, in February 1447, a parliament was summoned to meet at Bury St. Edmund's; the knights of the shire were directed to come armed, the force of the county was arrayed, and patrols watched the roads. Gloster, apparently unacquainted with these suspicious measures, proceeded from his castle of Devizes to this parliament, and was present at the opening. The next day he was arrested on a charge of high treason by the seneschal, and committed to confinement; when, seventeen days after, he was found dead in his bed.

That Gloster was murdered, has been the belief of all those historians who have derived their information from the apocryphal chronicles of Hall and Grafton; but it certainly does not appear to have been the general belief at the time. Three contemporaries speak of him as having died a natural death; and as these are all his friends and eulogists, it is difficult to imagine, if the opinion among intelligent men that he was murdered prevailed, why they should not at least have alluded to it. William Wyrcestre, recording the meeting of the parliament at Bury, merely says, "where died Humphrey, the good duke of Gloster, lover of virtue and of the state."* Whetehamstede, the abbot of St. Alban's, an intimate friend of the duke, says, that after being placed in strict confinement, "he sunk from sorrow upon the bed of sickness, and within a few days after yielded

* Wm. Wyrcestre, p. 463.

to his fate.”* Now, when we remember that the body of the duke was conveyed to St. Albans, and interred in the church of Whetehampstede’s own convent, can we imagine that if suspicions of his murder had prevailed, the abbot, with the body in his own possession, would not have instituted an inquiry? The third witness is Hardyng, a zealous Yorkist, and who about this time was constable of Kyme castle in Lincolnshire, not very far from the place of Gloster’s death; and he, finishing his chronicle in 1465, and addressing Edward IV. at a period when it certainly was the popular belief that the duke came to an untimely end, says, that he came to Bury

“ without faile,
Where in a *parlesy* he died *incontinent*,
For hevynesse, and loss of regiment;
And ofte before, he was in that sykeness
In pointe of dethe.”†

Indeed, looking on all the circumstances of the case,—his acknowledged ill health, his mortifications, and the surprise and shock of his committal,—we may easily believe that death might be the result, without the aid of either suffocation or poison. But, however false the popular account of his death might be, that account was most beneficial to the duke of York: it served to render Suffolk, whom he hated for his influence, yet more obnoxious to the people, and to increase the hostility which had been already excited against Margaret. The “lie of the day” did him good service in his attempt on his cousin’s crown; but, unhappily, that lie, adopted and promulgated by the writers of the Tudor dynasty, has taken its place

* Whetehampstede, p. 365.

† Hardyng’s Chronicle, p. 400.

among historical facts, and in every abridgment of English history, whatever other events are passed over, the murder of the good duke of Gloster always occupies a prominent place.

In the situation in which the king was at this time, the death of his last surviving uncle could not yield him any advantage, for his influence in the council had declined from the time of the release of Orleans ; while, favourite as he still was with the people, his death under any circumstances of suspicion would inevitably cause their long-suppressed discontents to burst forth : besides,—and this was obvious to all,—with the death of Gloster, while the king continued childless, York, the bitter enemy of his queen and favourite minister, would become next heir to the crown !—every argument was therefore in favour of sparing the duke's life, even had he been found guilty of treason. Whether he was guilty or not, is another of those historical problems which we have no means of solving ; but it is difficult to believe that so sudden and so decisive a measure as his commitment would have been adopted, had not strong suspicions existed.*

Six weeks only passed away after the death of the duke of Gloster, and then his ancient enemy, cardinal Beaufort, was numbered with the dead ; but “ that he died in the agonies of despair, is a fiction we owe

* Mr. Turner, although he leans to the opinion that Gloster was murdered, yet remarks that “ no crime could be more foolish.” The only advantage which Suffolk could gain by the duke's death was the grant of the county of Pembroke, which three years before he had obtained for himself and his wife, in case the duke should die without heirs. This, however, is not sufficient to account for a wealthy noble committing so great a crime.

to the imagination of Shakspeare." He left the bulk of his immense wealth in charity, bequeathing to the queen the "cloth of gold bed and Arras hangings" of the chamber which she had occupied at his manor-house; and to the king 2000*l.*, which he refused, remarking that Beaufort had always been a good uncle to him, and bestowing it on his two lately-founded colleges, Eton, and King's College, Cambridge. Unfortunately for the peace of the king and the welfare of the land, these two great rivals bequeathed their deadly enmities to their respective representatives; and Edmund duke of Somerset and the duke of York from henceforth laboured for each other's ruin. But the latter had a higher aim in view, and although for the present he contented himself with clamouring loudly against the cession of Maine and Anjou—possessions which it was utterly impossible to keep, and with fomenting the popular discontent against Suffolk, his eye was fixed upon the crown. The falcon sat quietly within the closed fetter-lock, but he was eagerly awaiting the time when he should swoop upon his prey.

During the interval which preceded the impeachment of Suffolk, we find scarcely any notice of Margaret, except one which places her before us as the enlightened patroness of literature. Influenced by her husband's example, who had a few years before founded two noble colleges, Margaret, in 1448, founded that at Cambridge, which, with the general title of "Queen's College," bears her hereditary arms; and she dedicated it to St. Margaret and St. Bernard; and on the corner stone was engraved, at

her express desire—" *Erit nostræ reginæ Margaretæ, Dominus in refugium, et lapis iste in signum.*"* The college was richly endowed by her, and Henry bestowed on it additional gifts.

The following year, the truce which had been concluded with France having some time before ceased, Charles refused to accede to farther prolongations of the armistice, and menaced Normandy. The duke of Somerset, by influence of the queen, superseded York as lieutenant, while he was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, for ten years;—a step apparently dictated by wise policy, since it was a kind of honourable banishment to one who was certainly the most powerful adversary of the house of Lancaster. Had England been able to retain Normandy, York would probably never have been recalled, and Somerset have retrieved his favour with the people; but Normandy was eager to throw off a yoke to which she had never willingly submitted;—Dunois, the most valiant of French commanders, had encamped with a powerful army on her frontiers, while Somerset, surrounded by an adverse population and with ill-paid troops, sent an earnest but unavailing "credence" to parliament for further aid. Ere that aid could arrive, Dunois had overrun Normandy, and forced Somerset to the citadel of Caen, where at length he was forced to capitulate; and, "within one year and six days, Normandy, with its seven bishoprics and its hundred fortresses, was entirely recovered by the French king."

* "The Lord will be the refuge of our queen Margaret, and this stone shall be the sign." Vide Leland, Col. vol. v. p. 225.

That the loss of France should be bitterly dwelt upon by writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, cradled as they were amid recollections of English prowess on her plains, is not astonishing; but that writers, even in the present day, should join in their censures of Beaufort, because he so earnestly laboured to conclude a war which he wisely foresaw must end in the utter expulsion of the English, and re-echo the abuse of Hall and Holingshed against Suffolk and his party, merely for yielding what it was impossible to retain, is indeed astonishing.* The disgrace attendant on the loss of Normandy, (if disgrace it were,) belongs to that party which, rejecting at the congress of Arras the offer of Normandy and Guienne, still demanded that Henry should be acknowledged king of France; not to those who would have ceded the mere title, for the substantial advantage of obtaining such valuable territories, and putting an end to the war. In the beginning of this chapter we have traced, at greater length than might perhaps be thought needful, the decline of the English power in France; but it will not be found useless, when it is recollected how great a majority of our historians pass over these earlier steps, while the latter, although the necessary consequences, receive undue prominence; and thus it is that Suffolk and Somerset are viewed as traitors, and

* It is really very edifying to find all these writers, while they express the utmost indignation at the loss of France, gravely censuring the "ambition" of Margaret, who, after all, only fought for her husband's hereditary dominions. Now, it is a question well worthy their consideration, whether Margaret had not at least as great a right to the English crown, as the people of England had to the kingdom of France.

Margaret's marriage as an event fatal alike to the honour and happiness of the land.

But while the people, accustomed to consider Normandy as their birthright, clamoured loudly at its cession, the transfer of Anjou and Maine filled up the measure of their rage ; and Suffolk, who shortly before had, with great impolicy, been created duke, was openly charged with treason. It was indeed singularly unfortunate, that the actual cession of these two provinces should have followed so closely upon that of Normandy. Still, with this Suffolk is not chargeable ; for circumstances, over which he had no control, had prevented their earlier transfer. During this stormy period, we find, from one of the letters in that valuable collection, the " Paston Letters," that York had visited England, " and is departyd ageyn, in ryght gode conceit wyth the kyng, but not in grete conceit wyth the queene," to whom he probably expressed himself warmly against her favourite minister : and from subsequent remarks in this letter, we find that great divisions prevailed among the council.

Meanwhile the state of the kingdom was most unsettled ; and the beginning of the new year was marked by the murder of the bishop of Chichester, at Portsmouth, by the mariners, whom, as treasurer, he was deputed to pay.* Popular fame declared, that with his dying breath he charged Suffolk with treason ; and the vindictive passions of a rude multitude, inflamed by the blood of one victim, now

* The bishop of Chichester had unfortunately been sent to Anjou in the preceding autumn, to deliver up the provinces ; hence the rage of the people.

fiercely demanded another. The parliament met immediately; and there Suffolk, alluding to the "hevvy rumor and noyse of sclaundre and infamie ageynst him," demanded that his accusers should meet him face to face; and in a noble speech indignantly asked wherefore he, whose father had died fighting against France, whose three brothers had been slain, the one at Azincourt, and the other two at Jargeaux; himself, a knight of the garter for thirty years, and a faithful servant of his country against France for thirty-four, during which time he had been wounded, imprisoned, and forced to pay a heavy ransom,—he, whose lands, whose titles, whose hopes, and whose heart, all centred in England, should be accused of treason.* We know not what reply was made to this eloquent appeal, but popular clamour prevailed, and he was committed to the Tower. Ere a month elapsed, and unfortunately ere popular clamour had spent itself, Suffolk was released; and, as a contemporary letter remarks, "hath his men ageyn wayting upon him, and is ryghte wel at ese and merry, and is in the kyng's gode grace, and in gode consent of ye lords as well as ever he was." It was perhaps impolitic thus to bestow public marks of honour upon one against whom public feeling had but lately been so strongly expressed; nor can we be surprised that the parliament now formally impeached the favourite. Some of the charges are very extravagant—that he strove to incite the French prisoners confined in London to rise against the king; that he, "above his instructions," ceded Anjou and Maine;

* Parl. Rolls, vol. v. p. 176.

that he fortified Wallingford castle with "gunnes and gunpowder," against the expected coming of the French king; but it affords an additional proof of his innocence of the duke of Gloster's murder, that this is never mentioned. Suffolk replied to the charges, protesting his innocence, "for God knoweth I am, and shall ever be, and never was othir, but true to you soverain lord." The king was forced to bow to the will of the parliament; assured of Suffolk's loyalty, he would not condemn him—overborne by the commons he dared not pardon him; the sentence, therefore, was banishment for five years; as, in respect of treason, "The king holdeth you neither declared nor charged."

This sentence excited the utmost rage of the populace; placards, charging him with treason, and demanding his life, were affixed to the church doors; a large body of armed men awaited his release from the Tower to intercept him in St. Giles's fields; and Suffolk, with prophetic forebodings, proceeded to arrange his affairs, and toward the latter end of April, after summoning the knights and esquires of the county, and solemnly swearing that he was innocent, and writing that beautiful letter to his son,* he embarked at Ipswich with two vessels and a small pinnace. While off Dover, a fleet came in sight, and the largest of their number, the Nicholas, of the Tower, a vessel of Bristol, manned with a hundred and fifty men, sent to the duke, commanding him to come on board. Not daring to refuse, Suffolk entered the fatal ship, when he was seized, and made

* It may be seen in the Paston letters, vol. i. p. 33. Dr. Lingard remarks that it is difficult to believe that the writer of this letter could have been either a faithless subject or a bad man.

prisoner. That this seizure was a regularly concerted plan, is proved by the fact that he was kept there three days accompanied by his confessor, while messages passed between those on board and some persons on shore. At length, after being subjected to a mock trial by the mariners, on the 2nd of May he was conveyed on board the pinnace, and there, one of the sailors, having directed him to lie down, "smote off hys hede with halfe a dozen strokes, and toke away his gown of russet and his doublet of velvet, and leyde his body on the sands at Dover; and some say his hede was set on a pole by it, and his men sit on the sands by grete circumstance (order), and praye; and the sheriff of Kent doth watch the body, and hath sente his under-sheriff to ye judges and kinge."* The writer touchingly says, "I have so washyd thys litel bille with sorrowful tears, that unethes (scarcely) ye shall rede it;" he also says that when Suffolk heard the name of the ship, "then hys herte fayled him," for he remembered that a sooth-sayer had told him that if he could escape the Tower he should be safe.

The loss of so devoted a friend to the house of Lancaster, deeply distressed the king and queen; proclamations were issued for the apprehension of the murderers, but none were found to seize them; while the nobles who had distinguished themselves by hostility to Suffolk, appeared at the head of large bodies of their retainers, "well beseen," and openly demanded that all who had been of his party should be expelled the court. Toward the end of June the

* Paston letters, vol. i. p. 39.

commons of Kent, always a turbulent part of the population, aroused by rumours of the vengeance which Henry intended to take upon them for their supposed connection with the murder of Suffolk, assembled under the conduct of an adventurer, called Jack Cade, to the number of twenty thousand men, and marched to Blackheath. Cade has generally been considered as a man of the lowest class; but there are circumstances attending this insurrection, which render it probable that, although a needy adventurer, he was a man of some education, and perhaps of family. The insurrection was unquestionably an experiment to ascertain with what degree of favour the duke of York's claim to the crown would be received, and an experiment so important would scarcely have been intrusted to an ignorant peasant. On receiving news of this rising, Henry came to London, when the complaints of "the commons of Kent," which the reader will find in Stowe, were presented. These complaints embody the popular grievances, misgovernment, the undue interference with the people's right of choosing members of parliament, and that "the traitors who contrived the death of the duke of Gloster, of the cardinal, and the dukes of Exeter and Warwick," are still in favour—a charge which seems, as Suffolk was dead, to point at the queen, but which, from its "wholesale" character could scarcely, even at that time, have been believed; they also demanded that York should be called to the council. Cade now seems to have adopted the name of Mortimer, and he claimed kindred with the duke of York,—an additional proof that he could not

have been a *low* adventurer. Sir Humphrey Stafford advanced against him at Seven-oaks, where his troops were defeated, he was killed, and Cade, arraying himself in the "briganders set wyth gilt nails, hys salet and gilt spurres," of the deceased leader, now pressed on, and, as "captain of Kent," entered Southwark. Within two days, a large body of insurgents from Essex marched toward London, and encamped at Mile End; and the king and queen, hastily quitting Westminster, fled to Kenilworth. This, according to Fabyan, displeased the citizens; but Margaret doubtless well knew how little she could rely on the fidelity of the "good people of London," who, far from being indignant at a horde of lawless insurgents occupying Southwark, actually demanded that they should be admitted into the city. The lord mayor, Chalton, immediately summoned a council, when the majority agreed to admit them, and one Horne, an alderman, who "spake sore against it," was committed to prison. The welcome news was communicated to Cade, and at five o'clock the city opened the Bridge-gate, and admitted him and his followers. It is impossible, in the face of these facts, to believe that Cade's insurrection was *merely* a rising of the commons. At the rising of Wat Tyler, the city, although neither so well guarded nor so populous, resolutely opposed the entrance of a far more numerous body, not for one or two, but for seventeen days; but now, no sooner did a band of rebels, who had just achieved a slight victory over the king's troops, advance toward the city, than its gates were thrown open. How shall we account for this, save

on the supposition that Cade's party were intended merely as the precursors of the duke of York's army?

The "capitayne" entered the city "right royally," and rode along the principal streets, causing proclamations to be made in the king's name, and pausing beside the London-stone, which he struck with his sword, exclaiming, "now is Mortimer lord of London;" and then he withdrew into Southwark with his followers for the night. The next morning he re-entered, and directed the judges to continue their sittings, and caused indictments to be preferred against several persons obnoxious to the commons, among whom were lord Say, and his son-in-law, sir James Cromer, the sheriff of Kent. These two, after a mock trial, were beheaded at the Standard, and their heads, placed on poles, were borne by the ferocious populace through the streets. Three days did the followers of Cade respect the authority of their leader and abstain from plunder, but a rude multitude could not long be so restrained. The splendour of the shops in Westcheap first attracted them, and several mercers and goldsmiths were plundered. The leader's influence from henceforth seemed to fail; robberies increased, and the lord mayor summoned the citizens to defend the bridge against those very rebels whom not a week before they had invited in. The contest here seems to have been most violent; it lasted six hours, and it is asserted that the Bridge-gate was six times taken and retaken; but at length the citizens prevailed. At this moment, the bishop of Winchester, who with the two archbishops had remained in the Tower, promptly seized the opportunity afforded by the turn

of the battle, and crossed the river, bearing pardons under the great seal to all those who would immediately lay down their arms. Multitudes accepted the offer, and the leader, with a company too insignificant to excite alarm, retired into Kent. Here they quarrelled, and Cade fled; he was pursued by Iden, the sheriff of Kent, taken, and beheaded in a garden at Hayfield; and his head was sent to London, and placed on the bridge.* The list of goods in the possession of this man is curious and very characteristic. Six "parish cups" of silver, nine spoons, a purple girdle, a musk-ball, a beryl stone, and 105*l.* in money, were found upon him; while in "two trussing coffers," there were silver dishes, salt-cellars, a chalice of gold set with pearls, an image, "a goblet of the old fashion," a pair of sheets, a remnant of black velvet, another of cloth of gold, a silver pot without a lid, and numerous other articles.† In the letter of the sheriffs respecting the disposal of his body, he is called John Cade, but a contemporary document, which gives a list of the persons indicted, declares his real name to have been "Mr. John Aylmere," and adds, that he was "a *ffysysion*, and he was gaily beseen in skarlet, and wedded a squyer's

* There is a very characteristic letter respecting this rising, in the Paston collection; how the writer was "sworne to the captain and the commons," how they took from him a bond for 36*l.* "my purse with five gold rings, and a gown of fine Perse-blue furred with marten, and then, would have smyted off my hede," and how at last he was "putte out into ye battel at ye bridge." Vide vol. i. p. 89. This account seems to corroborate the opinion that Cade was merely an engine in the hands of others. Probably had the public voice then summoned York to assume the government, he would have immediately marched to London.

† Ancient Kalendars, vol. ii. p. 219.

daughter of Taunhede,"* an account not so very improbable, if, dismissing the fictions of Shakspeare from our minds, we keep merely to the statements of contemporary writers; since, in none of these is he described as a low or uneducated person.

The insurrection having thus been quelled, Henry and Margaret returned to London; but although vigorous measures seem to have been adopted, the whole land was in that disturbed state which awakened alike the fears of the king's friends, and the hopes of the adverse faction. To increase these hopes, York, early in September, quitted Ireland unbidden, and with an army of four thousand men took the road to London. On his way he sent for Tresham, the former speaker of the house of commons, who was way-laid on his return, and killed. From the petition of the widow, on the parliament rolls, it appears that he was killed by a party of nearly two hundred armed men, who openly expressed their hostility to York, and "vaunted themselves of the sayde murder." It is not unlikely, therefore, that the designs of the adverse faction were well known, and that the Lancastrians had been already compelled to take up arms. York passed on to London, where he demanded an interview with the king, and being refused, according to the charge on the parliament rolls, he "wyth grete bobaunce and inordinate peeple, wente to your paleis of Westminstre, and ther bete down the speres (partitions) and wallys of your chambre, having no consideration of your high presence."† The poor

* Ellis's Letters, second series, vol. i. p. 113.

† Parl. Roll. vol. v. p. 346.

king immediately promised to call a parliament, and York, having taken his measures, retired to Fotheringay. At the meeting of the parliament its hostile feeling was plainly seen ; a petition for the forfeiture of Suffolk's estates, was presented, which, in addition to former charges, now accused him of the duke of Gloster's murder. The petition was rejected ; and convinced, notwithstanding the discontent that prevailed, that the king had still a strong hold on the popular affection, the adverse party refrained from further hostile indications.

In 1452, Henry, just after the feast of Christmas, which had been celebrated with great splendour, created his two half-brothers, earls of Richmond and Pembroke ; and in the spring, accompanied by these two young nobles, Margaret went on a progress through the eastern counties, to endeavour, with a wise forethought, to conciliate the affections of the gentry. Margaret Paston, who gives an account of her visit to Norwich, dwells with much satisfaction on the gracious reception which the queen gave to "my cousyn Elizabeth Clere," and seems herself to have been charmed with her graceful courtesy. It was, indeed, important that Margaret should use every means to gain the attachment of her subjects ; for though actual war had not commenced, the sword was half drawn from the scabbard, and while York, wary and astute in the council as bold in the field, was wielding every energy to advance his purpose, Henry, always meek and passive, was now beginning to exhibit symptoms of that distressing malady, probably derived from his maternal grandfather, which

soon after reduced him to a state of idiocy. The events which took place ere the close of this year, seem very obscure. York again collected a formidable force, and ere the king had returned from Wales, passed beside London into Kent; the king soon followed him, and halting at Blackheath, sent two bishops to demand an explanation of his conduct. York replied with vehement protestations of loyalty, that, indignant at being made the subject of so many false accusations, he had come to vindicate his innocence, and requested an interview with the king. This was granted, when York accused Somerset, who was present, of treason, and Somerset cast back the charge. Whether the protestations of York prevailed, and the king really believed him innocent, or whether, overawed at his menaces, Henry was forced to yield, we know not, but York, after having been actually arrested, was set free on the easy terms of again swearing allegiance, and Somerset was sent to the Tower.

From henceforward, York seems to have kept near Henry, not improbably watching with exultation the progress of that disorder which, the following spring, rendered him incapable of public business; while Margaret, with a husband verging toward idiocy, and her two most attached counsellors, the one dead, and the other in close confinement, saw herself almost without a friend.

Toward the end of March, the king's illness rendered it necessary to appoint a protector; but ere this was done, a deputation of three bishops and some of the lords, were sent by the parliament to

wait upon him at Windsor. The conference was opened "ryghte conyngly" by the bishop of Chester, but he "could gete no aunswer ne sign, for no prayer, ne desire, lamentable chere, ne exhortation, ne eny thyng that they, or eny of hem could do or saye."* The lords, after a short interval, again endeavoured to obtain an answer; the king was led into another room, and there the lords "moved and stirred his hyghness, but they coulede have ne aunswer, worde, ne signe, and therefore wyth sorrowful hertes, came ther waye." York, craftily professing his insufficiency, and declaring that "he took the said name and charge," only for the due and humble obedience which he owed to the king, was now appointed protector.

With York in supreme authority, and Henry an unconscious idiot, the situation of Margaret would have been most trying, but her desolation was now cheered by the prospect of the birth of an heir to the crown, and, attended by the duchess of Somerset, to whom, as well as to the duke, she appears to have been strongly attached, she remained during the summer chiefly at the palace of Westminster, and here, on the 13th of October, her only child was born. The joy of the people at the birth of a prince was great; it was in vain that the Yorkists, mortified at the failure of their hopes, endeavoured to excite suspicions of his legitimacy, and, foiled in this disgraceful attempt, pretended that he was "chaunged in the cradel:" the whole nation welcomed the grandson of Henry the Fifth. The infant prince was baptised at West-

* Parl. Roll, vol. v. p. 241.

minster* with great splendour, and Margaret, with wise policy, gave him, not the name which his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had borne, but a name still dearer to England, that of Edward.

Still the king's malady continued; but the attachment of the great body of the people to the house of Lancaster was proved by the promptness with which the parliament passed an act, determining that, should the king's illness be hopeless, the prince, on attaining his majority, should be protector. During almost the whole of 1454, Henry remained in a state of the greatest bodily and mental weakness, and York still retained the protectorate; but by the beginning of 1455, Henry began to recover his reason, and the following interesting extract from a contemporary letter,† describes his first interview with his wife and child. "Blessed be God, the kyng is well amended, and hathe ben syn Cristemasse day; and on St. Johan's day comaunded his awmoner to ryde to Canterburye wyth his offeryng, and comaunded the secretaire to offer at St. Edward's. And on the Wensday at noon, the quene came to hym, and brought my lorde prynce wythe her; and then he asked her what the prynce's name was, and the quene told him Edward; and then he helde up his hands, and thankyd God therof. And he seyde he nevir knew till that time,

* The following extract from the Pell Rolls, shows the splendid array of royal infants:—"To Margaret the queen, paid to her for an embroidered cloth, called 'crimsome,' for the baptism of the prince; and for twenty yards of russet cloth of gold tissue, and 540 brown sable backs, worth altogether 554*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*," (about 7000*l.* present money!) In the same roll there is also a donation made to the convent of Westminster for wax lights, which they provided on the day of prince Edward's baptism."

† Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 80.

nor wist not what was sayde to him, ne wist not wher he had ben whiles he was syke, til now; and he asked who was the godfaders, and the quene tolde him; and she tolde him that the cardinal (Kempe) was dede, and he seyde he nevyr knew thereof, til that tyme, and he seyde oon of the wisest lordes in thys land was dede.—And he seyth he is in charitye with all the world, and so he wolde al the lordes were.” The benevolent wish of the hapless monarch was not to be realized, but his restored health and intellect compelled York to resign the protectorate; the Lancastrian party resumed their sway, the earl of Salisbury was discharged from the chancellorship, the duke of Somerset released from the Tower, and York retired to the Welch marches.

Rejoiced at so favourable a turn of affairs, Margaret early in spring visited her good city of Coventry, a city which, as it bore the title of “the prince’s chamber,” in ancient records, seems to have been chosen as one of the first to be visited by the infant prince. From the town records we learn that Henry accompanied her, and that the most quaint and curious pageants welcomed her entry. At the gate Isaiah and Jeremiah addressed her as empress and queen, and congratulated her on the birth of her son. At the church gate St. John and St. Edward promised their aid, and the four cardinal virtues gave each a complimentary stanza; at the cross were “divers aungels,” and farther on a pageant of the nine worthies, among which Hector “welcomed her tenderly.” Joshua promised to fight for her “as knyghte for hys ladye,” and David praised her many virtues.

Lastly, the Conduit was "arraied wyth as many vergyns as myghte stande thereon;" and more delightful still, "a grete dragon," breathing flames, and St. Margaret killing him, according to her legend, while she assured her namesake queen that both "nature and gentilness" bound her to do Margaret of Anjou all kindness.*

How long Margaret remained at Coventry, a city to which she seems to have been much attached, we know not; but early in May, York, accompanied by the duke of Norfolk, and the earls of Salisbury and Warwick, with an army of three thousand men, marched toward St. Alban's. The king set out from London to meet him, and encountered the Yorkists in battle array. They halted and demanded the life of Somerset; this Henry refused, and a skirmish, for it could be scarcely called a battle, ensued, in which, according to an eye-witness, "ther was at most sleyne vii score;" but the Lancastrians sustained a severe loss in the death of him on whose account the battle had been fought, the duke of Somerset. The king was wounded in the neck with an arrow, and was found sitting in a tanner's house, probably unconscious of what had passed. He was conducted, with great show of respect, to London, and York again resumed his sway. The remarks of several writers in the "Paston Letters," show the anxiety that pervaded the public mind; at this period they describe the Londoners as having arisen, and "every man to harness;" and the retainers of the chief nobility filling their lords' barges with weapons "daily

* Vide Sharp's Coventry Mysteries.

unto Westminster." Prophecies of ill, too, were not wanting; for one Dr. Green foretold a battle before St. Andrew's day, in the Strand, at which seven lords and three bishops should be slain, and this prophecy, it appears, excited much alarm. Meanwhile the king, queen, and prince, remained at Hertford; the insurgent lords obtaining a full pardon, on the apocryphal plea that they had sent letters of submission to the king, which were kept back by Somerset; and York, in reward of his treason, was made high constable.

During the following year Henry's malady returned,
and York was again appointed protector; in the
next following year the king recovered his reason, he
went in person to the parliament, and the protec-
torate was formally revoked. Still there was but an armed neutrality, and when, in 1457, a parliament was summoned at Coventry, and the nobility took that most explicit and strongly-worded oath, "I knowleche you most high and myghty, and most Xten prynce, kyng Henry the Sixth, to be my most redoubted soverain lord, and *rightwesly by succession* borne to reigne upon me, and al your liege people, voluntarily, and by no constraint, ne cohersion," it is appalling to think that nearly half their number* committed wilful and deliberate perjury.

Early in 1458, an earnest and vigorous effort was
made, chiefly by the exertions of Bourchier, arch-
bishop of Canterbury, himself a Yorkist, for a recon-
ciliation between the queen's party and York. The

* Parl. Rolls, vol. v. p. 347.

chief nobility were summoned to London, and daily conferences took place; the king's council meeting at the Whitefriars, while York and his party occupied the Blackfriars. A writer in the "Paston Letters," expressing his hope that all will come to a good conclusion, says that the king and queen were daily expected in London; but Margaret, with great prudence, remained with her husband and son at Berkhamstead, until the conference was ended. On the 25th of March, a solemn procession to St. Paul's ratified this reconciliation; on this occasion Margaret was led by York, the hostile nobles followed hand in hand, and the king in royal state returned thanks to Heaven, that the effusion of blood had been spared; the pious, but weak-minded Henry, was probably the only one in that assembly who believed the sincerity of this hollow peace.

Although York was no longer protector, his power was now daily extending: the primate was his friend, and the earl of Warwick, whose influence among the men-at-arms and mariners was perhaps greater than that of any other commander, was his sworn supporter; and when he was appointed high admiral and captain of Calais,—the sole remaining continental possession of England, and, more important still, her whole navy, were transferred into the hands of the Yorkists. It was scarcely to be expected that with such advantages York would contentedly return to a private station, and there is reason to believe that, during the summer, he was making preparations for another contest. Meanwhile a quarrel arose between one of Warwick's retainers

and one of the king's servants ; the tumult increased, and Warwick believing, or professing to believe, his life in danger, hastened into the north to consult his father-in-law and York ;* and from thence sailed to Calais, and there awaited his time.

The preparations of the adverse party seem not to have been unknown to the court. On new-year's day, collars with the white swan, the badge appropriated to the young prince, were distributed profusely among the Lancastrians; and summonses were issued to all the king's friends to meet him at Leicester.† From a letter of Margaret Paston, dated in April, we perceive that great management was displayed in these summonses. After acquainting her husband that many privy seals had been brought to Norwich, she remarks that the one sent to her son was signed with the king's own hand, which but few others were ; “ and also, ther were more special terms in hys than were in others ;”—a proof how anxious Margaret was to conciliate those Lancastrians, whose vicinity to the duke of Norfolk, a warm friend to York, might expose them to the influence of so powerful a neighbour. We find also from the same letter, that each landholder was to bring as

* The story that Margaret caused him to be arrested is mentioned by no contemporary writer.

† We have no authentic account at what period of this contest those celebrated badges, which have given it its distinctive name, were first adopted. The *Red Rose* was first assumed as a device by John of Gaunt, and it in consequence became the badge of the house of Lancaster. The badge of the house of York was not, as has been generally supposed, the *White Rose*, but the *White Falcon* ; and the *White Rose* does not seem to have been adopted by the duke of York until the time of his claiming the throne. This was the device of the castle of Clifford, one of his possessions, and probably was chosen as the badge of his followers, from its contrast to that of his rival.

many persons, defensively armed, as his feudal tenure demanded, and also that they were to furnish themselves with money for two months' expenses.* Summer passed on; at length the earl of Salisbury moved from Middleham to join the forces of the duke of York on the Welsh marches; he was intercepted by lord Audeley, and a battle ensued; Audeley maintained his ground, but the earl passed on, unmolested, to Ludlow. War had now actually commenced, and the king had advanced to Worcester with sixty thousand men; but unwilling to begin the strife, he held back, and still persisted in sending offers of reconciliation. The delay was favourable to the Yorkists, for they were meanwhile joined by sir Andrew Trollope and the choicest men-at-arms from Calais; and Henry now advanced to Ludiford, while York, to encourage his troops, who seem to have been unwilling to encounter the king, spread a report that he was dead. But the mere report was not sufficient; and York actually "causid masses to be seyde and offerynges,"† for the soul of the living monarch. This falsehood was by some means discovered by sir Andrew Trollope: his knightly spirit indignantly spurned at the fraud, and with his four thousand veterans he joined the forces of the king. A short conflict ensued, the Yorkists fled, and Henry and his army returned to Coventry.

The acts of attainder passed at the parliament held immediately after in this city, have by some writers been considered as unwarrantably severe. It is difficult to account for such an opinion; for surely if

* Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 174.

† Parl. Rolls, vol. v. p. 477.

it be allowed that there is such a crime as treason, York and his adherents had committed it. At the fight at St. Alban's, as well as at Bloreheath, they had advanced against the king, with "banners displayed" as the preamble to the act recites, and they had shed blood in both contests; conciliation had been tried until it was rejected with scorn; what measure therefore remained for the king's party but to attain the leaders? This measure, which an able writer attributes, and probably correctly, to the influence of Margaret, did indeed "not leave the duke the choice of remaining a subject with impunity," but his choice had been made years before; and we may well pardon a queen, who had been exposed to the plots and insurrections of nearly ten years, a measure which compelled her opponents to exchange the guise of pretended friends, for that of open enemies.

From Wales, York returned to Ireland, and Warwick to Calais, which he strongly fortified, while the young duke of Somerset was appointed captain of that important town by the council, and he set out to take possession; but the garrison made a vigorous defence, and when he landed at Guisnes, he saw his own ships carried off by the mariners to their favourite commander Warwick. Master of the seas, this powerful nobleman soon after sailed to Ireland, to concert measures with York; he was met on his return by the duke of Exeter, who now held the office of high admiral; but not daring to trust his mariners in a fight against so popular a leader, Exeter was compelled to turn aside;—the lions of the Plan-

tagenets bowed before the "bear of Warwick," and that fortunate noble passed on triumphantly to Calais.

All was soon ready, and in June, Warwick with fifteen thousand men landed in Kent. He proceeded to Canterbury, and swore upon the cross there, that he and York had ever held steadfast faith toward the king. He was now joined by the archbishop, and numerous parties of the country people, and London willingly opened her gates. Making no stay, he swiftly advanced northward, while Henry, who with Margaret and the prince had remained at Coventry, led his troops toward Northampton. Here Warwick led the van at the subsequent battle, where, through the treachery of lord Grey de Ruthyn, the cause of Lancaster lost the day. The queen with the prince fled to Chester, from whence they escaped into Wales, after having been robbed by their servants of all their jewels; and from thence they eventually proceeded to Scotland. Henry was taken prisoner; he was treated with all honour,—another proof how attached the nation were to the house of Lancaster,—and when he entered London, Warwick preceded the captive king bareheaded, and carrying the sword of state.

Parliament immediately met at London, and the acts passed at Coventry were repealed. York now arrived at London, and pressing on to Westminster proceeded to the parliament house. He stood a short time with his hand upon the throne, while the lords awaited his address to them, but he spoke not, and the primate now asked him if he would visit the

king. "I know no one in this realm who ought not rather to visit *me*," was the haughty reply; and from henceforth his claim to the crown was publicly avowed. A few days after, York placed in the hands of the bishop of Exeter, Warwick's youngest brother, a statement of his claims; when they were read, he spoke on the same subject, declaring, in reference to his not having for so many years pursued his claim, that, although he "abstained for causes not unknown to al this realm, yet though ryghte for a tyme reste, and be putte to silence, yet, it rotteth not, ne nor shal not perishe."* His own party earnestly supported his claim; but among the lords there were still many who would not entirely cast off their ancient allegiance, and they pleaded the oaths they had taken to Henry. Meanwhile, the poor king was told by the primate that York had demanded his crown. "My father was king, his father was king; *I* have worn the crown forty years from my cradle, and you have all sworn fealty to me, as your fathers swore fealty to mine," was the intelligent answer of Henry. The contest in parliament, although the lords pledged to the support of Lancaster were absent, seems to have been severe: at length it was decreed that Henry should be king for his life, but that the duke of York and his sons should succeed. The king's assent was readily obtained,—most probably because he dared not refuse,—and he proceeded once more to St. Paul's, with the crown on his head,

* Parl. Rolls, vol. v. p. 377. The reader will find in Lingard an excellent account of the proceedings of this important parliament. His whole history of the reign of Henry the Sixth is most valuable.

attended by York as heir-apparent, to return thanksgivings that the sceptre had been assured to his feeble hand at the price of the disinheritance of his only son!

The indignation of the northern lords at this intelligence was great. They immediately collected their forces, and the Red Rose of Lancaster and the white swan of their disinherited prince were displayed on the banners of the earl of Northumberland, and the lords Clifford, Dacre, and Neville. They assembled at York, where they were joined by the forces of the duke of Somerset and the earl of Devon, while the duke of York swiftly repaired to his strong castle at Sandall. Meanwhile, Margaret remained with the young prince in Scotland, and we may well imagine with what anxiety she anticipated the approaching conflict. Her son was now seven years old, and, with his mother's beauty, bade fair to become the inheritor of that mother's commanding talents; forsaken by his imbecile father, the heir of a kingdom, yet an outcast from his own land,—surely no *woman* will charge Margaret of Anjou with ambition, because she sought so earnestly and so perseveringly to maintain the rights of that child, thrown so wholly on her affection and her care.

Summoned by the confederated lords, Margaret with the prince set out to join them. Ere she arrived, the victory of Wakefield had been gained, and the heads of her great foeman, York, and his powerful coadjutor, the earl of Salisbury, welcomed her arrival.* On the 30th of December, the battle

* Most historians have told us that Margaret was at the battle of Wakefield. From the testimony both of Whetehamstede and William

of Wakefield was fought, and thus only two months intervened between York's appointment as heir to the crown and his death. The battle appears to have been most sanguinary, while the cruel murder of York's youngest son, Rutland, by lord Clifford, increased the hostility of the Yorkists towards the Lancastrians. Margaret now advanced toward London at the head of a large army, nor encountered any opposition until she reached St. Albans. Here, Warwick determined to give battle; and the Lancastrians, under the conduct of the dukes of Exeter and Somerset, penetrated as far as the market-place, but were repulsed; they next forced their way outside the town, and after a long conflict put their foemen to flight. The approaching night alone saved the Yorkists from utter destruction; and they fled, leaving Henry, whom they had brought with them, sitting in his tent with his chamberlain. To him Margaret and her son hastened, and when the weak, but affectionate king perceived them, he arose and eagerly embraced and kissed them many times, as though aroused from a dream; exclaiming with that religious feeling which mental weakness could not subdue, "Blessed be the Lord God, who hath done such great things!" He inquired the result of Wyrcestre, we find that she did not arrive from Scotland until after it was fought. The last-mentioned chronicler expressly says,—“The fight being over, the queen came from Scotland to York.” The story, therefore, of Margaret commanding the head of York to be cut off, of her insulting it, and crowning it herself with a paper diadem, is wholly fiction. York's head, however, was thus crowned, and set upon Yorkgate; but this must have been done before Margaret's arrival. Some writers have doubted whether York was slain on the field, or taken alive and beheaded: the Parliament Rolls however expressly say, that the Lancastrians, “after they (York and Salisbury) were dede, made them to be heded.”

the battle, and then calling for a sword conferred knighthood on the young prince, who, in his turn, conferred knighthood on some of the nobles who had so bravely fought that day. The king, with his wife and son, then retired to St. Albans' abbey, where they were received by the abbot, who has transmitted this account, and by the whole convent with hymns of thanksgiving.

If Margaret, ere Warwick had rallied his scattered forces, could have pressed on to London, the Red Rose might have effectually triumphed; but her army, probably wearied with toilsome marches at so severe a season of the year, were unwilling to proceed; and, far worse, began plundering the town and abbey. Meanwhile, according to William Wyrcestre, the duchesses of Bedford and Buckingham, both Lancastrians, arrived at St. Albans with a message from the aldermen of London, petitioning the queen's grace and favour. The result of this mission we cannot ascertain,—most probably Margaret was favourable; but the story of the excesses of her northern army soon reached London, and the populace rose, stopped the supplies which were about to be sent to her, and declared they should oppose her entrance. Warwick had now united his forces with those of Edward, the young duke of York, and they proceeded toward the metropolis; Margaret withdrew northward; and Edward, a young man of remarkable beauty and fascination, rode into Clerkenwell fields, where his claims to the crown and Henry's incapacity having been strongly urged by Warwick's brother, the young bishop of Exeter, he

was hailed king with loud acclamations. The council, all Yorkists, joined the cry; Edward rode to Westminster-hall, mounted the throne, while the heralds proclaimed him in due form; and the sceptre passed for ever from the hands of Henry and the house of Lancaster.

But Margaret would not yield up the cause of her son and the Red Rose without a struggle. The Lancastrians drew together near Ferrybridge, and Edward led his troops northward to encounter them. Here the battle of Ferrybridge was fought, with a slight advantage to the Lancastrians,—an advantage dearly paid for by the fatal battle of Towton, fought on Palm Sunday. This sanguinary contest commenced in the evening, continued through the night and the whole of the next day, during a heavy fall of snow; and many times the victory seemed on the side of Lancaster. It was on this occasion, according to Monstrelet, that Warwick, almost in despair at seeing his friends dead or flying, “cried out with tears, ‘May God receive the souls of all those who die in this battle!’ and then adding, ‘dear Lord, I have no other succour but thee,’ he drew his sword, kissed the cross on its handle, and swearing whatever might be the result he would never quit the field, plunged it into the breast of his war-steed.” The gallant spirit of Warwick doubtless reanimated the courage of his soldiers, but it was the fresh troops of the duke of Norfolk, who came up just in time to take part in the conflict, that gave the victory to the White Rose. From sixty to eighty thousand Lancastrians and about fifty thousand Yorkists were engaged

in this most sanguinary battle, and more than thirty thousand! full two-thirds Lancastrians, lay dead on the field, or were drowned in the river that intercepted their retreat. The earl of Northumberland, lords Clifford, Neville, Wells and Willoughby, and sir Andrew Trollope, were killed, and the earls of Devon and Wiltshire made prisoners, and beheaded. The dukes of Somerset and Exeter escaped, and conducted the king with Margaret and the prince to the borders, where the cession of Berwick ensured them a friendly reception at the Scottish court.

Although the partisans of the Red Rose had sustained so disastrous a defeat, their spirit, like that of their queen, was unsubdued, and lord Hungerford and a few tried friends proceeded to France to supplicate aid from the French king. In a letter* addressed by that nobleman and sir Robert Whittingham to Margaret, in the August of this year, after acquainting her with the death of Charles the Ninth, and the accession of her cousin Louis, they continue, "and madam, fear you not; but be of gode comfort, and beware that ye adventure not your person, ne my lord the prince by the sea, till ye have word from us,—and for God's sake the kyng's hyghnes be advised the same." They conclude with earnest assurances that death only shall prevent their coming. From a list appended to this letter, we find that Margaret, wit her son, was at Edinburgh, accompanied by a suite of twenty-two knights and gentlemen; and among them was the celebrated sir John Fortescue, who, therefore, most probably, about this time had

* Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 246.

been appointed tutor to the young prince. During Margaret's stay here, according to Monstrelet, she proposed a marriage between her son and the eldest daughter of the Scottish king, but it was broken off through the agency of the duke of Burgundy, who was related to Mary of Gueldres, the queen. In the following year, Margaret visited France, and she stood godmother to a son of the duke of Orleans. From a letter of the same date we learn, too, that disaffection toward Edward prevailed at Calais, that two hundred of the garrison were sworn Lancastrians, "for default of wages," and that Margaret was ready at Boulogne, with "moche sylver," to pay the troops if they would give her admission. It is probable that Warwick, who always kept a watchful eye on that important strong-hold, had news of this disaffection, and suppressed it, for we find that Margaret returned to Edinburgh, and remained there until spring.

In May 1463, Margaret set sail from Kirkcudbright, with a small fleet, and proceeded to Bretagne, to endeavour to obtain the co-operation of the duke. He received her kindly, and although he refused openly to aid her cause, we learn from the historians of that duchy that he gave her 12,000 crowns. She now proceeded to her cousin Louis the Eleventh, and after earnest and prolonged entreaties, obtained from him the grant of two thousand men, and permission for de Brezé, the high seneschal of Normandy, to take the command of them. The arrangements of Margaret, in this instance, seem to have been marked by a wise policy, for which comparatively few writers have given her credit. Although Edward was *de*

facto king, his right was far from being generally acknowledged, even in the southern counties, while the northern, undismayed by the disastrous battle of Towton, adhered with unfaltering faith to the house of Lancaster. The cause of the Red Rose too seems to have gained additional partisans, even by its misfortunes; and Margaret, the heroine of the lost battle-field, in her desolation, found herself surrounded by a host of friends, who in her prosperity had viewed her with distrust, and, perhaps, with aversion. That the general feeling of the people was at this time in favour of Henry's return, is strongly proved by the concluding address of Hardyng to Edward, where he prays him to "consyder wel this sixty yere and three," that whether king Henry and his family remain in Scotland, or pass over to France, they are likely to prove equally dangerous; and that, therefore, as he is "of smal intelligence," conciliation is best—

"Wherfor, good lord, bring home these persons three,
With all theyr men, and geve them grace al fre,"

and grant to Henry "the duchye whole of Lancaster his ryghte."* Surely such a proposal could never have been made to the reigning monarch, had not the writer, a man grown old in camps and councils, perceived the strong bias of the people in favour of the exiled sovereign.

With her little army, Margaret returned in October to Northumberland, and laid siege to Bamborough, Alnwick, and Dunsterburgh. These fortresses yielded; but ere she could follow up her successes the advance of Warwick forced her to take refuge in her ships.

* Hardyng's Chronicles, p. 413.

The winds and the waves now seemed to have conspired against her : part of her fleet was dashed on the rocks, and all her treasure sunk ; while five hundred of the French troops, who had taken refuge on Holy Island, were killed or made prisoners. In an open fishing-boat, attended only by her faithful friend de Brezé, Margaret escaped to Berwick, and from thence, Henry having been safely consigned to the charge of his friends in Wales, she proceeded with her son to Flanders. It was while pursuing her perilous journey through a forest in Hainault, that her celebrated rencontre with the robber took place. According to Monstrelet, Margaret, de Brezé, and her son, lost their way in a wood, and were robbed by banditti. They were saved from being murdered, only by a quarrel that arose among the men respecting the spoil ; and while they were yet fighting, she caught up her son, and fled to the thickest part of the forest. Here she met another robber, " to whom she instantly presented her son, saying, ' Take him, friend, and save the son of a king.' The robber received him willingly, and conducted them toward the sea-shore, from whence they arrived at Bruges, where they were most honourably received."*

Leaving her son at Bruges, Margaret next proceeded to count Charolois, at Lille, who treated her with great respect, and from thence she set out to Bethune to confer with his father the duke of Burgundy. He also received her kindly, " though he knew well that she had never loved him ; " he pre-

* Monstrelet, vol. iv. p. 104. He expressly mentions this incident as having taken place in Hainault.

sented her with two thousand gold crowns, and caused her to be safely conducted to the county of Bar, a possession belonging to her father. Here Margaret with her son remained; nor, although her friends in the following spring again assembled their forces, and summoned Henry from Wales, does she appear to have taken any part in this, the last struggle; when after the fatal battle of Hedgeley Moor, and more disastrous still that of Hexham, the hopes of the Lancastrians were completely blighted, Henry became a fugitive in Westmoreland, and the second duke of Somerset laid down his life for the Red Rose.

From this time, even her most devoted followers seem to have become convinced of the present hopelessness of their cause; and a large number of Lancastrian nobles, mostly young men, whose fathers had been slain in the wars, fled to Flanders to seek protection from the duke of Burgundy, himself, through his maternal grandmother, a descendant of John of Gaunt. "These I myself have seen," says Philip de Comines, "in so great poverty, that even beggars were not so poor; and I have seen a duke going on foot without hose, seeking his bread from door to door." This unfortunate nobleman was the duke of Exeter, he who had been lord high admiral, and who, together with Somerset, led the army from York to St. Albans. De Comines, however, informs us that the duke of Burgundy, when made acquainted with the severe privations of the English exiles, willingly gave them relief, and that he settled a pension on the duke of Exeter. Many of the exiles also re-

paired to Margaret, and as far as her limited means would allow, she seems to have retained them in her service.

From the close of the year 1463 to the beginning of 1470, Margaret continued with her father and son; and this was probably the most happy period of her singularly chequered life. In 1465 Henry was taken in Yorkshire, and committed a prisoner to the Tower; but in his imbecile state, imprisonment was scarcely a misfortune, and his life was secure, while his son remained alive to succeed him. Waiting, therefore, the time when the popular voice should again make itself heard, and when that son might be able himself, to lead his adherents to battle, Margaret now devoted all her attention to his education.

The court of king René, although on a very small scale, and under the rule of a singularly fantastic and eccentric sovereign, was not ill calculated for the abode of a spirited and intelligent young prince; for chivalry, on the wane in France and England, still maintained its ancient character, and its minutest observances, in the little territory of René of Anjou. About this time, too, as we learn from Bourdigne,* "as the gentle and chivalrous heart of this king delighted in knightly deeds, he determined to found an order for the honour of God, the support of the church, and the exaltation of knighthood; and considering that all noble hearts ought from day to day to increase and augment their well-doings, as well in courtesy and fair behaviour, as in valiancy and feats of arms, he founded an order of knighthood, and

* "Histoire aggregatif D'Aniou."

named its members the knights of the crescent, and gave them for their badge a crescent of gold." Whether the young prince, his grandson, became a member of this new order, we know not; but, surrounded by all the picturesque observances of chivalry, we learn from his tutor, that he grew up "in a war-like spirit; that he was a gallant horseman and expert in the use of the lance."

But Margaret had determined that her son should not merely receive a knightly education; she had, therefore, from an early period of his childhood, placed him under the care of the celebrated sir John Fortescue, who was now appointed chancellor; and it was for the express instruction of the young prince, that his treatise "De laudibus Legum Angliæ" was composed. This curious work is written in the form of dialogues between the tutor and his pupil: the prince in the outset expressing his dislike to the study of the law, and Fortescue, by arguments derived from history, from the schools, and from Holy Writ, urging its paramount importance. Throughout the whole work he strongly asserts the limited nature of the monarch's authority, and the inalienable rights of the subject, and bids his pupil rejoice "that such is the law of the kingdom of which you are inheritor." He also points out to his respect the statutes of England, because "they are not enacted by the sole will of the prince, but with consent of the whole kingdom by their representatives, and they must needs be full of wisdom and prudence, since they are not the result of one man's mind only, but of more than three hundred." Throughout the

whole treatise, although a resident at the court of an arbitrary sovereign, and in the heart of France, sir John Fortescue takes every opportunity of impressing on his pupil's mind a reverence for the free institutions of his native land, especially for trial by jury; and after giving a vivid picture of the slavery and wretchedness of the French peasantry, and forcibly contrasting it with that of the English, who "are fed in great abundance, clothed in good woollens, well provided with household goods, and have all things to make life easy and happy," he remarks that all this is the result of freedom: for "God hath declared himself the God of liberty, this being the gift of God to man in his creation.*" Surely, while no slight honour is due to the tutor who could thus uprightly fulfil his duty to his royal pupil, still more honour is due to Margaret, who, cradled in arbitrary doctrines, could allow and encourage that tutor to impress such truly English principles on the mind of her son.

The care which both mother and tutor so laudably bestowed on the young prince was unhappily in vain; for the sceptre which they trusted he might ere long wield was never to be his; and with the year 1470 we enter upon the last part of Margaret of Anjou's eventful history. The hostilities which, from the period of Edward's ill-advised marriage, had prevailed between him and that most powerful noble,

* The second work of this writer, "The difference between an absolute and limited monarchy," although written after he had made his peace with Edward the Fourth, a monarch whose rule was most arbitrary, is yet as distinguished by its advocacy of free principles as the former;—a proof, as Mr. Hallam observes, that these principles were fully recognised by the nation.

Warwick, at length burst forth into open warfare.

Warwick, with his family and his son-in-law the duke of Clarence, indignantly quitted England, and, denied an entrance at Calais, passed on to Harfleur, where the whole company was received with the highest respect by the French authorities. The mission of Warwick was soon known; the partisans of the Red Rose assembled from all parts to welcome him; and the king of France having arrived at Tours, Margaret was summoned to meet her ancient foeman, who now stood ready to offer that aid to the house of Lancaster, which the house of York had found so valuable. The struggle between pride and interest in the breast of Margaret, is said to have been most severe. Warwick had been the great object of her distrust and hostility; and now, as the price of his assistance, he demanded that her son should marry his second daughter, the lady Anne Neville. Louis, who saw the necessity of conciliating a noble who possessed far greater power than either of the kings who claimed the crown of England, laboured unceasingly to overcome the hostility of the queen; fifteen days of earnest conference passed, and at length her consent was obtained.

The whole royal and noble company now repaired to Angers, where all the English exiles were joyfully welcomed by the inhabitants, who, rejoiced at the prospect of the daughter of their duke being again restored to her kingdom, "provided them all, right willingly," says Bourdigne, "the choicest wines, the rarest meats, and every delightful pastime, so that the English were well content, and thought no

place in the world like Angers." Here they seem to have staid some time; and here, most probably, the marriage of prince Edward with the daughter of Warwick was celebrated. Toward autumn Warwick returned to England, and entering London on the 6th of October, released Henry from captivity, and led him to St. Paul's, once more a king; but Margaret, and it is difficult to ascertain the reason, still remained with her son in France. The news of this success was received with every expression of joy by the French king; he commanded *Te Deum* to be sung, and gave directions that Margaret, who was about to proceed to Paris, should be received there with royal honour. Accompanied by her son and daughter-in-law, and the countess of Warwick, Margaret arrived at Paris about the beginning of December, where she was received by the bishop, provosts, and heads of the university, and passed through tapestried streets to the Palais, which was appointed for her residence, and continued there during the winter.

Early in the spring, Margaret and her son set out on their return to England, but they were detained by contrary winds several weeks. At length they set sail; but while they were on their voyage, that counter-revolution, which placed Edward again on the throne, was effected; and Warwick was now collecting his forces for his last battle. On Easter eve, the Yorkists and Lancastrians met beside Barnet, and that fatal fight began on Easter Sunday; deceived by the resemblance of the badge of the earl of Oxford, a devoted Lancastrian, the "mullet or,"

to the golden sun, which Edward had lately adopted as his device, the partisans of the Red Rose attacked their own brothers in arms, and the confusion became general. The Yorkists, under the command of their king, soon put them to flight; and Warwick, and his brother, lord Montague, were slain. On that very day, Margaret and her son, unwitting that their great supporter lay dead on the field of Barnet, landed at Weymouth, after a toilsome and perilous voyage. The news too soon arrived, and Margaret, immediately on hearing it, fainted. On her recovery, together with her son, she took refuge in the sanctuary of Beaulieu; and well would it have been for the cause of Lancaster, had they from thence returned to France. But unsubdued in spirit, even by the defeat at Barnet, and the death of their great leader, the Lancastrians rallied their scattered forces, once more advanced the banner of the Red Rose, and drawing toward the west, invited Margaret and her son to join them. Edward, meanwhile, drew near with his victorious army, and the last battle of the Roses was fought beside Tewkesbury. In the onset, the Lancastrians had the advantage arising from a most favourable position; but, deceived by the feigned retreat of a body of Yorkists, the duke of Somerset, who commanded, quitted his important station to pursue them. The Yorkists turned on their pursuers, while another body intercepted their retreat, and the Lancastrians were defeated with great loss, and Margaret and her son were taken prisoners. The young prince was brought into the presence of Edward, who struck him on the face

with his gauntlet: that signal was sufficient, the unhappy young prince was immediately murdered by the attendants, while Margaret was reserved for a long captivity. —

The death of the heir of the house of Lancaster could not allay the ferocious king's thirst for blood. The duke of Somerset and some knights had taken sanctuary in a neighbouring church, and thither he rushed sword in hand. A priest, bearing the host, interposed between the blood-thirsty monarch and his victims, and obtained the promise that their lives should be safe. Two days the promise was kept;—on the third, a band of armed men rushed in, and in defiance of that right of sanctuary which the Lancastrians had always respected, and to which, but just before, Edward had owed the safety of his wife and children,—they seized Somerset and several attendant knights, and, at the command of the dukes of Gloster and Norfolk, struck off their heads. Edward, victorious even beyond his expectations, now prepared to return to London, where an adventurer named Falconbridge, who had been vice-admiral to Warwick, had just made a desperate attempt upon the city, with a view to liberate king Henry, who had been again consigned to the Tower. “This bold but unsuccessful attempt,” as Dr. Lingard remarks, “sealed the fate of the royal captive. On Tuesday Edward entered London in triumph; on Wednesday the dead body of Henry was exposed in St. Paul's.” That this unfortunate monarch died a natural death can scarcely be believed; and although Edward, contrary to what some writers have stated,

did bestow some cost upon the funeral of him who had been crowned king of England and France ; still, that he was accessory to the death of that innocent, and almost unconscious rival, whose decease would leave him without competitor, seems too evident to be doubted. The testimony of every contemporary writer, save one,* and the character of Edward, who from his first appearance on the stage of public affairs, scrupled at no crime when the crown was in view, or at stake, equally combine to prove the truth of the common belief.

The unhappy Margaret, a widowed and childless captive, was at first confined at Windsor ; but toward the beginning of 1472, she was removed to Wallingford Castle. With the treatment she received, and with the negotiations which soon after were entered into for her liberation, we are alike unacquainted ; but the allowance of five marks a week, which, as we learn from several entries in the Pell Rolls, were assigned for her expenses, proves that she was not treated as a queen. There she remained in captivity nearly four years ; and during the greater part of that time, negotiations were pending between her

* This writer, whose narrative has been lately published by the Camden Society, says that king Henry died " of pure displeasure and melancholie ;" a most unlikely death for one who was scarcely capable of understanding aught that was said to him. But the whole narrative of this writer is unworthy of credit, since he carefully suppresses whatever is discreditable to Edward ; even that well-authenticated fact, his perjury before the altar at York. In a later publication of this society, " Warkworth's Chronicle," the reader will find in the introduction three additional testimonies, drawn from nearly contemporary manuscripts, that Henry was murdered ; but perhaps the strongest testimony of all, is that of the " Croyland Continuator," a Yorkist, and contemporary, who expressly says, " May God grant time for repentance to the person, whoever he was, who laid his sacrilegious hands on the Lord's anointed."

cousin the king of France and Edward respecting her ransom, which was fixed at fifty thousand gold crowns. This sum was at length raised by Louis, on condition of king René joining with his daughter in transferring to him the reversion of the duchies of Lorraine and Bar, and the county of Provence; and early in 1475, Margaret of Anjou returned to her native land. Immediately on her arrival she executed the required deed of gift;* and we learn from the accounts of the receiver-general of the French king, that Louis assigned her an annual pension of six thousand livres.

Of the closing years of this most unfortunate and illustrious woman, we have few records. As she returned to the friends and relations of her youth, and was treated with the respect due to a queen, for that title was scrupulously assigned to her,—and possessed an income which, although not princely, was still amply sufficient for the expenses of a woman of royal birth, we may hope that the last years of Margaret's life were passed in comfort and repose. In 1480, her father died; and immediately on his decease, she executed with her sister, the duchess of Lorraine, another deed of gift of her paternal inheritance. This, which is dated in October, 1480, is stated to have been signed “withoutside the walls of Angers;” Margaret was therefore most probably residing there. She seems, however, according to Bourdigne, to have soon after removed to Dampierre,

* Vide Denys Godefroy's edition of Philip de Comines, p. 443;—the second deed, together with the will of René, will also be found in this work; and in all these, Margaret is termed queen. In the *Fœdera*, vol. x., are several entries, relating to the payment of Margaret's ransom.

near Saumur,—and here, in 1482, at the house of François de Vignolles, lord of Morains, a gentleman who had been a vassal of her father, she died. With the precise date of her death, and with the place of her sepulture, we are alike unacquainted; for no monumental record exists of this illustrious woman: but such memorial is unneeded; the story of her steadfast courage, and of her heroic devotion, are written in the annals of our land; nor, while the tale of that disastrous strife of the rival Roses occupies its place in our history, can the name of Margaret of Anjou, the heroine of the Red Rose, be forgotten.

ELIZABETH WYDEVILLE.

CHAPTER XXV.

Parentage of Elizabeth—Her Marriage with Edward—Anger of Warwick—Elevation of her Family—The Joust of Lord Scales and the Bastard of Burgundy—Rising in the North—Hostility toward her Family—Edward flies—Elizabeth takes Sanctuary—Edward's Restoration to Power—Contests of his Brothers—His Death—Hostility of Richard toward Elizabeth—She again takes Sanctuary—Richard becomes King.

IN the midst of the mournful details of war and bloodshed which occupy almost the whole page of our history, from the battle of Bloreheath to that of Tewkesbury, the story of Elizabeth Wydeville, the beautiful widow of the attainted Lancastrian, who knelt with her infant orphans at the monarch's feet, to supplicate the restoration of their father's lands; but who obtained from that monarch's overmastering passion no less a boon than the crown, seems rather like some tale of romance, than a story of actual life. Nor is it surprising that, while so many an incident of these eventful times has been forgotten, this tale should still keep its place in popular recollection, and the name of Elizabeth Wydeville be familiar to all who have the least acquaintance with English history.

Elizabeth Wydeville was the eldest daughter of Sir Richard Wydeville, an esquire to Henry the Fifth, who early in the following reign was made

constable of the Tower, and who subsequently became lieutenant of Calais, during the regency of the duke of Bedford. It was here, most probably, that his future wife first became acquainted with him; and with the most indecorous haste, within a few months after the death of her husband, Jacquetta of Luxemburgh, duchess of Bedford, married the young knight, who had no wealth but his sword. The news of this marriage proved equally displeasing to the relations of Jacquetta, and to the English council; and the latter proceeded to declare the dower of the duchess forfeited, and cast Sir Richard Wydeville into prison, for marrying a tenant of the crown, without royal licence. Wydeville was shortly after liberated; but from a petition on the parliament rolls, we find that they both suffered great privations. Eventually her dower, or a portion of it, was restored to the duchess; and Sir Richard Wydeville was again employed in France, where, both under Suffolk and York, he displayed so much gallantry, that in 1448 he was created baron Rivers, in 1450 made a knight of the Garter, and he was subsequently appointed seneschal of Aquitaine, and admiral of the Cinque Ports. During these years the duchess chiefly resided at his manor of Grafton, in Northamptonshire, and here, most probably Elizabeth, her eldest child, was born. The date of her birth is uncertain, but it was probably about 1438. Of the early history, the time, or circumstances of her first marriage, nothing can be learnt; and all we know of her first husband is, that Sir John Grey of Groby was attached to the cause of Lancaster, and fell at

the battle of St. Albans. On his death the young widow seems to have returned to her father's house, where she resided for three years.

Meanwhile Edward, who, from the time of his coronation had left state affairs to the earl of Warwick and his brother, and attended to little except pleasure, came into the neighbourhood of Grafton to pursue that amusement to which he was passionately addicted, hunting. Whether while here he introduced himself to the duchess, to whom most probably he had formerly been known; or whether the politic duchess invited him to her house, we cannot learn, but on his first visit the beautiful Elizabeth Wydeville, with her orphan children, was presented to him, to petition for the restoration of her husband's lands.

The king was instantly struck with her beauty; he repeated his visits by stealth, and at length the loveliness of the daughter, or more probably the arts of the mother, prevailed, and Edward offered to share his throne with the widow of the Lancastrian knight. This offer was most grateful to the wily duchess, who, when only seventeen, had entrapped the regent of France into a hasty marriage, and she willingly seconded the king's impatience for its completion. Toward the end of April, 1464, while Warwick was leading a large army toward the north, to suppress the rising of the Lancastrians, Edward, under the plea of hunting, repaired to Stoney Stratford;—from thence, on the 1st of May, he proceeded to Grafton, and married Elizabeth Wydeville in the presence of her mother and two female servants, and then returned. He continued in the neighbourhood a few days,

visiting Grafton by stealth, and then came to London, and issued a proclamation for his army to meet him at York. Ere he arrived, Warwick and his brother had gained the victories of Hedgeley Moor and Hexham, and Edward returned to London.

By what means the king at length made known to his own family and to Warwick his marriage, cannot be ascertained; but the news was received by his mother with the greatest indignation, and by Warwick with the rage of a man who beholds all his hopes suddenly blighted. The popular story of Bona of Savoy, seems to have no foundation in truth; we have no authentic testimony that Edward ever made proposals to her, while we have direct proof that Warwick never at this period quitted England;—the anger of this powerful noble, therefore, probably arose from a more personal cause. Edward, regardless of continental alliances, had married an Englishwoman, might not he then have married a daughter of Warwick? It seems, too, that lord Rivers had long before been an object of especial aversion to him,* and it was his daughter who was now queen; and her mother, a woman who always seems to have been an object of dislike, probably from her intriguing character, now stood ready to contest with him that influence over the wayward mind of the king, which hitherto had been exclusively his own. It seems probable, from what is related as having taken place,

* In the Paston Letters we find, that after lord Rivers was taken at Sandwich, in 1459, he was brought to Calais before the Yorkist lords, "and my lorde of Salisburie rated him, calling him knave's son, and my lorde of Warwyk rated him, and sayde his father was but a squyer, and he hadde since made himselfe by marryage; and also it was not his parte to have such language of lordes being of the kinge's blode."

after the death of Edward, that his friends at this time seriously contemplated setting aside this obnoxious marriage—but their efforts were unsuccessful; and in excuse for the king, they affirmed that he had been inveigled by the magical arts of the duchess, and that he had endeavoured to surmount them but in vain. This excuse, however injurious to Elizabeth and her mother, seems to have been generally believed; * the king's family and Warwick submitted to what they could not avoid, a council was called in the autumn at Reading Abbey, and there, her two most determined enemies, the king's next brother, the duke of Clarence, and Warwick, introduced the beautiful Elizabeth, as queen, to the assembly. The birth of her eldest daughter, in the following spring, probably was the cause of the postponement of her coronation; but the ceremony was at length performed with great magnificence at Westminster by cardinal Bourchier, the archbishop, on the 26th of May, 1465.

The apprehensions with which the king's relations had viewed this marriage, were soon confirmed. The king, influenced, as was believed, by the arts of the duchess of Bedford, who was constantly in attendance on her daughter, heaped honours and wealth upon every member of her family. Lord Rivers was advanced to an earldom, and received the treasurership of England, which he only relinquished to receive, soon after, the nobler office of high constable. His five unmarried daughters became wives respectively

* Fabian remarks, " what obloquy ran after this marriage, how the kyng was enchaunted of the duchess, and how after, he wolde have refused her (the queen), I here passe over."

to the duke of Buckingham, the earls of Arundel and Kent, lord Herbert, and the heir of the earl of Essex; his eldest son, by marriage with the daughter of the late lord Scales, received that title, and his younger son, although not of age, became the husband of the dowager duchess of Norfolk, a woman of fourscore, while Elizabeth's eldest son by her former marriage, was created marquess of Dorset. Such honours, and what in that unsettled time was of far more importance, such noble alliances, which linked the family of the Wydevilles with many of the most powerful houses of England, could not but be deeply mortifying to the haughty Warwick. He, the representative of the age-honoured Nevilles, the earl of Warwick and Salisbury, the captain of Calais, lieutenant of Ireland, great chamberlain, lord high admiral; * he, who had the whole navy of England at his bidding, who was cousin to the king, and who by his prowess, as well as by his policy, had himself set the crown upon Edward's brow, was thrust aside that a mere esquire, who by two fortunate marriages had advanced himself, might take his place. He dissembled his anger; but, that from henceforth, he seriously contemplated the setting Edward aside, and advancing Clarence, after events clearly prove.

During the first years of her marriage, we find but few notices of Elizabeth. Although the violent passion of the king soon subsided, and an almost endless succession of mistresses disgraced the royal court, still Edward seems to have treated his queen with respect,

* Dugdale. Warwick was first-cousin to the king; his father, the earl of Salisbury, being brother to Cicely duchess of York, Edward's mother.

and to have been strict in exacting from all around her the honour due to her royal station. During these years she was so constantly accompanied by her mother, and, it is probable, so completely under her influence, that it is difficult to ascertain her real character: that she was distinguished rather for yieldingness than spirit, seems likely from her conduct in after years; but that she was deficient in intelligence, we have certainly no proof. Had the state of England, and the court and character of Edward been different, it is probable that Elizabeth Wydeville would have been the patroness of literature, and of every refined and graceful amusement; for we find her during the first year after her marriage completing the endowment of Queen's College,* which had been commenced by Margaret of Anjou, and obtaining for it from the king "many priveleges;" while it was under her auspices, that the celebrated combat between her brother lord Scales, and the bastard of Burgundy took place. This celebrated combat, which cast the last gleam of expiring chivalry over this dark and mournful period, had its origin in the playful fancy of the queen, who, during the Easter festival which preceded her coronation, caused some of the ladies of her court to meet her brother lord Scales, as he returned from his devotions in the chapel at the palace of Shene, and fasten on his leg a gold collar, from which depended a *fleur de souvenance*, made of jewels. This gift the chivalrous lord Scales instantly recognised as a summons to him

* Leland's Coll., vol. v. p. 225. Many noble women we find aided in the erection of this college; the duchess of York, the lady Margaret Roos, and others; "because it was founded by two queens."

to perform some gallant feat of arms. He, therefore, the very next day wrote a letter to count de la Roche, the bastard of Burgundy, one of the most valiant knights of the age, declaring that, "in worship of our Lord, the glorious Virgin, and St. George, veray tutor and patron, and cry of English men; also for the gloriose scole and study of armes, and for the vailliance therof to my power to mainteyne and followe; and for to voide slothfulnesse of tyme loste, and to obeye and please my feire lady,—I Antony Wydeville"—have taken in charge to accomplish the following feats of arms. He then proposes to run a course "wyth groundyn spere hedis," then "sette the handes to the sharp swerdes, thirty-seven strokes to be smyten betwene us two;"—that the next day they shall fight on foot with spear, axe and dagger, "until oon of us be borne to the erthe, or the weapon points be broken." This letter was sent some time after by the Chester herald, who went in great pomp to Brussels, and presented it with a fitting speech, to which the bastard of Burgundy answered right courteously. On an appointed day the Chester herald was conducted by all the heralds of the court of Burgundy into the presence of the duke, and there, bearing the *fleur de souvenance*, "the emprize," honourably in a kerchief, with three obeisances uncovered it. The bastard of Burgundy then touched it, making a reverent obeisance, and said, "I praye you recommande me unto my lord Scales, my brother, as hartely as ye can; I thanke him right highly of the honor he doeth me:" and then Chester, bearing the emprize so touched in the presence, departed.

Almost two years elapsed ere the combat took place; and then, at the close of May 1467, the bastard of Burgundy, accompanied by many knights and esquires, to the number of four hundred, arrived at Gravesend, where they were received by the garter king at arms, by whom he was conducted to London and presented to the king. The day of combat was fixed for the 11th of June, and the lists, ninety yards in length and eighty in breadth, were prepared at the east side of Smithfield. Hither, on the appointed day, the king and queen and a large company of the nobles came. The king occupied a pavilion, and sat there, "clothed in purple, with the garter, and holding a thick staff in his hand; "and truly," says Olivier de la Marche, who was present, "he seemed a person well worthy to be king, for he was a fine prince, and tall, and well-behaved." An earl held the sword a little on one side of him, and he was surrounded by twenty counsellors, "all with white hair;" and at the foot of this pavilion were seats, the one for the constable, and the other for the marshal. Then the noble knight, the lord Scales, "royally beseen" on horseback, came to the barriers with two helmets borne before him by two nobles, while four followed, bearing two spears and two swords. Nine attendants followed, the first leading his own steed, trapped with white cloth of gold and the red cross of St. George, and the others most splendidly adorned. The bastard then advanced, with a similar train, his steed trapped with crimson garnished with silver bells. He proceeded to the king, and there announced that he was ready "to

fulfil the actes of arms;" proclamation was then made, the constable commanded the herald to cry *Lessex aller*, and then the two knights ran a course courageously. The lord Scales on this occasion seems to have gained a slight advantage, and the sports closed for the day. On the morrow, the combat was on foot; and the king, having expressed his fear that danger might ensue from the sharp spears, directed that the fight should be with axes and daggers. They commenced with axes, and smote many thick strokes, until lord Scales struck his antagonist on the side of his visor; "then the king percevying the cruel assail, cast hys staff, and with high voice cried, 'Whoo.'" They now presented themselves before the king, who commanded them to take each other by the hand, and so love together as brethren in arms; the which was done of right good will, and so ended this celebrated combat.*

But the mimic strife of the friendly joust was ere long to be succeeded by actual war; for while this magnificent spectacle was exhibited in England, Warwick was visiting the king of France, who received him with such honour, that the jealousy of Edward was excited. Suspecting the brother of Warwick, George Neville, of collusion on this occasion, he took away the seals from him, and Warwick, on his return, indignantly retired to his castle of Middleham. Towards spring, an apparent reconciliation took place; and when the king's sister set out from London on her marriage to the duke of

* In "Excerpta Historica," from whence the above account is taken, a most minute and interesting account of this joust will be found.

Burgundy, Warwick, as though high in the king's favour, rode beside her. Early in the following year (1469), a most extensive popular insurrection broke out in Yorkshire, under the conduct of a leader called Robin of Redesdale. The exactions of the royal household were the chief plea for this rising; but hostility to the queen's relations, who were considered authors of those taxes which impoverished the nation, was also publicly expressed. The duchess of Bedford, too, was denounced as a witch, and one Wake exhibited an image of lead, "lyke a man at arms, broken in the myddest, and made faste by a wire," and declared that it had been constructed by her for magical purposes.* At the commencement of this insurrection, Edward was on a progress in the eastern counties, apparently accompanied by the queen; for we find in one of the Paston letters that she was expected at Norwich, and that it was directed that she should be "received and attended as worshipfully as ever queen was before her." Whether her visit took place we know not, but it seems probable that it was intended to counteract the hostility which so generally prevailed against her relations. Edward now advanced to Fotheringay, but, alarmed at the disaffection of the surrounding districts, he repaired to Nottingham, and summoned Warwick and his brother Clarence to his aid. But they were not inclined to hasten their return, for they were at Calais, where, shortly after, the first step in Warwick's ambitious career was gained, by the marriage of Clarence with his eldest daughter. The insur-

* Parl. Rolls, vol. vi. p. 232.

gents meanwhile daily became more numerous, and in the battle of Hedgecote the royalists were defeated with great loss ; lord Rivers, the queen's father, and his son John Wydeville, were carried to Northampton and beheaded, and the king, scarcely knowing what to do, retired to Olney. Clarence, with Warwick and the archbishop, soon after arrived here ; Edward began to reproach them with their conduct toward him, when he found that he was indeed their prisoner. Three months his captivity lasted, and then, by what means we cannot ascertain, he obtained his liberty, and returned to London just before Christmas. Another attempt to seize the king, again renewed the strife between him and this powerful noble, but, through the earnest mediation of the duchess of York, a hollow reconciliation was effected.

During all this time we have no notice whatever of Elizabeth ; nor, when, in the following summer, that even more extensive insurrection took place which ended in Warwick and Clarence renouncing their allegiance, and Edward proclaiming them traitors, have we any account of her. When Warwick returned in the autumn to release Henry from his captivity, and the king fled to Lynn, from whence he escaped to Holland, Elizabeth and her family, probably for security, were at the Tower ; but on the approach of Warwick toward London, accompanied by her mother, and with her three infant daughters, she took refuge in the sanctuary of Westminster. According to Fabian, she "registered herself for a seyntuary woman ; and here, on the 3rd of November, her eldest son, the unfortunate Edward the Fifth,

was born. Here, without any of those festive observances which always at this period celebrated the birth of an heir, he was soon after baptised ; and the abbot and prior of Westminster, and lady Scrope, one of Elizabeth's few attendants, were the only sponsors that could be obtained for the inheritor of a crown. In this mean but secure asylum, Elizabeth and her children passed the winter ;* and she seems not to have left her hiding-place until the second revolution, which restored Edward to his country and his throne, took place.

The restoration of Edward was marked by circumstances of singular perfidy. Clarence, enraged that his father-in-law had married his younger daughter to prince Edward, secretly returned to his brother's allegiance, and while professing the utmost attachment to Warwick, had determined to desert him in the first battle ; George Neville, the brother of Warwick, and archbishop of York, to whose custody king Henry had been consigned, had planned to deliver him up on Edward's arrival ; and Edward himself caused his men to wear the Red Rose, while he assumed the ostrich feather in honour of the prince, and at the gates of York, and before the high altar of the cathedral, solemnly swore that he only returned to claim his father's lands. And this treachery of the three chief agents was successful :

* There is a letter from Edward in Ellis, directing that one William Gould, a butcher, for his "trew herte" toward the queen while in sanctuary, in sending her "halfe a beef and two moutons weekly," shall have license to freight his ship, the Trinity of London, with any merchandize, except wool, for one whole year. From this, it would appear that Elizabeth was most meanly attended ; for the consumption of meat in the household of the duke of Clarence about this time was actually ten beeves, ten calves, and sixty sheep per week.—Vide Liber Niger, p. 89.

Clarence joined his brother with a numerous army, George Neville welcomed him to London,* by placing the unhappy Henry in his power; and the victories of Barnet and Tewkesbury restored the crown to the perjured king. "In eleven days," says Philip de Comines, "did Warwick gain the kingdom of England, and in twenty days Edward regained it."

After such unparalleled but most unmerited success, it is not surprising that Edward kept the ensuing Christmas with the greatest splendour. That time in the year before, Elizabeth and her children were in sanctuary, safe indeed, through that forbearance of the house of Lancaster which York never repaid, but desolate; and Edward was an out-cast suppliant at a foreign court. Now, his opponents, father and son, were dead, and he whom beyond every other he most feared and hated, Warwick, was dead also, and the crown seemed firmly placed on his brow, and he had now an heir to inherit it. But even if, in the midst of his prosperity, his conscience suffered him to rest, the feuds of his two brothers would not permit him to enjoy a long season of tranquillity. Clarence, as husband of the elder daughter, demanded the whole of Warwick's immense possessions, while Richard of Gloster sought the youngest, who had been married to prince Edward,

* For the part taken by the city of London at this period, it is difficult to account, since it had, until within the last twenty years, been firm to the house of Lancaster. Philip de Comines accounts for this change on the ground of the popular qualities of Edward, and, what is more likely, his pecuniary engagements with the merchants; but these are not sufficient reasons. The writer had hoped that the city records might throw some light on this obscure portion of our history; but she has been informed by a competent authority, that they do not contain a single document of public importance relating to this period.

and asserted that the estates should be equally divided. The unhappy young lady who was the object of this contest had returned with prince Edward and the queen to England, and after the battle of Tewkesbury was taken prisoner. Falling into the hands of her brother-in-law, she was compelled to assume the dress of the inferior class, and, according to a contemporary writer, he actually placed her in a menial situation with a family in London. Here, the perseverance of Richard discovered her, and he immediately placed her in the sanctuary of St. Martin's le Grand.* The contest between the brothers now became more violent than ever; and from a passage in the Paston Letters, we learn that "the king and queen, and my lordes of Clarence and Gloster, went to Shene to pardon; men say, not al in charitee—what will fall out men cannot say. The kyng entreateth my lord Clarence for my lord Gloster, and he saith he may well have my lady his sister-in law, but they shall part no lively-hode." The influence of the king, however, soon after prevailed; the estates were divided between the two sisters, while their unfortunate mother was forced to retire to a convent, and Richard received the hand of the lady Anne. At this time he held, in addition to the office of high constable of England, that of warden of the West Marches of Scotland; and he seems chiefly to have resided at Middleham castle, but to have taken little or no part in affairs of state.

The anger of Clarence at his brother's award seems to have been deep; he does not, however,

* Croyland Continuator.

appear to have openly expressed it, but continued on friendly terms with the king until the spring of 1477. At this period, his wife having died in the preceding December, and apparently under circumstances of great suspicion,* he made proposals for the hand of Mary of Burgundy, the sole daughter and heiress of Charles the Bold, who had died just before. In this suit he was powerfully aided by the dowager duchess his sister, "whose heart," says the Croyland continuator, "was knit to her brother Clarence above all her other relations, and who sought with all her strength and with all her study to marry him to her daughter-in-law." The jealousy of the king was aroused at this; Clarence, with his large estates and extensive influence in England, would, as the ruler of Burgundy, be too powerful for a subject; he, therefore, refused his assent to the marriage, and Clarence indignantly retired from court. Whether he really endeavoured to stir up rebellion against his brother it is impossible to ascertain; probably he merely expressed himself violently, but he had aroused a second time the jealousy of his brother, who well recollected how powerful an opponent he had heretofore been, and, in January 1478, he was

* A lady belonging to the household of the duchess, Ankaret Twynhoe, was, it appears, charged with having administered to her "a venimous drinke of ale, mixt with poyson," on the 10th of October, of which she "sickened and died ten weeks after." From the petition, (Parl. Rolls, vol. vi. p. 173.) it appears that this unhappy woman was three months after taken from her manor-house at Cayford in Somersetshire, by fourscore retainers of the duke of Clarence; that she was hurried from thence to Warwick, where, without being allowed to see her daughter, she was put on her trial, condemned and executed within three hours. This judicial murder seems to prove that suspicion was excited respecting the death of the duchess, and that Clarence was determined that some one should be the victim.

arraigned for high treason. His indictment is singularly vague in its charges:—it states that he declared his servant Burdett, who had just before been executed on a charge of treason, had been unlawfully put to death; that the king wished to destroy his son, and that he was therefore compelled to keep him out of the way; that “oure soverayne lord *wroughte by nygromancie*, and used crafte to poyson his subjects, such as he plesed,” and, what most probably Edward might really believe, that he had been appointed by king Henry, his next heir after his son:—an emphatic proof how strong, even now, was the cause of Lancaster, and how willingly the people would aid the claims of any one who professed to derive his title from that source. In the charge of “nygromancie,” which it is stated Clarence preferred against the king, some allusion to the influence of the queen, who, with her mother, had formerly been accused of magical practices, was probably intended; and that she was considered as peculiarly the object of Clarence’s enmity, is evident from the preamble of the bill, which states that his treason was committed “againste the king’s moost royal person, and againste the persons of the *blessed* princesse oure alther soverayne and liege lady the quene, of my lorde the prince theire son and heire, and al other of theyr moost noble issue.”* To the charges thus brought against him, Clarence replied at length; but his defence has not been preserved, and we are thus unable to gain any farther light on this obscure subject. Whatever his defence might have been, the parliament, under

* Parl. Rolls, vol. vi. p. 193.

so arbitrary a monarch, were not likely to hold an opinion contrary to the royal will; Clarence was found guilty, and the warrant for his execution is dated the 7th of February. The execution was, however, for some unexpressed cause delayed, and ten days after it was reported that Clarence had died in the Tower. The silly story of his having been drowned in a butt of malmsey is too ridiculous to need refutation; but all contemporary writers agree that he was put to death, although none acquaint us with the manner.

There seems no reason to charge Richard of Gloster with having aided in procuring the death of Clarence; but that, from this period he aimed at the crown, seems very probable. The king, an indolent and diseased voluptuary, although not forty years of age, was most unlikely to live many years; and then, only three little children, the king's two sons, and the heir of Clarence,—who, indeed, was already by his father's attainder shut out from the succession,—would stand between him and his object. He therefore seems to have come more prominently forward, and although the suspicions of the king were not awakened, Elizabeth appears to have viewed him with distrust and hostility. The influence of the queen, or, perhaps, of her relations, was indeed during the last four years of Edward's life evidently increasing; her brothers, Lionel Wydeville, bishop of Salisbury, and Antony, now lord Rivers, were high in the king's favour, and her sons, the marquess of Dorset and sir Richard Grey, now arrived at manhood, were repeatedly receiving marks of his kindness, and were

appointed to important stations. This was most displeasing to Richard, as well as to some of the council ; but he concealed his anger until his time came.

The Christmas of 1482 was celebrated by Edward with uncommon splendour ; and it was remarked that his dress—and pride of apparel had always characterised that splendour-loving monarch,—far exceeded aught that he had ever before displayed. Little did he think it was the last festival he should celebrate ; but with the advance of spring he sickened, and he died on the 9th of April, 1483, at the palace of Westminster, after urging upon the lords of his council, some of whom were bitterly opposed to the queen's relatives, the necessity of peace and unity among them. A magnificent funeral graced his obsequies ; and after a splendid service in Westminster Abbey the body was conveyed to Windsor, and there buried in St. George's chapel.

Immediately on the king's death, the council proclaimed his son Edward the Fifth, who was now at Ludlow with a royal suite, and attended by his uncle lord Rivers and his half-brother sir Richard Grey. As the young king's coronation was arranged for as early a day as possible, it was necessary that he should be brought to London speedily ; and Elizabeth, whether she feared the designs of Richard, or whether she were anxious to throw additional power into the hands of her brother and eldest son, urged that he should be protected on his journey by an army. Her proposal alarmed lord Hastings, a nobleman never friendly to the queen, and he opposed it

on the ground of the overwhelming influence which it would confer on the Wydevilles. A long and angry discussion at the council board followed; insinuations against the power and influence of the Wydevilles were thrown out; lord Hastings declared he would retire to Calais, and the queen at length assented that her son should be accompanied by only two thousand horsemen. Meanwhile, Richard, although in the marches of Scotland, was narrowly watching these proceedings. He advanced southward with six hundred knights, all in mourning, and at York caused a magnificent service for his brother to be performed in the cathedral, and was the first to take the oath of fealty to his nephew. As he approached nearer London the number of his followers increased, and at Northampton he met lord Rivers and sir Richard Grey, the young king being a few miles in advance. He welcomed them with every honour; the evening passed pleasantly, but the next day they found they were his prisoners; they were hurried off to Pontefract castle, where, a few weeks after, they were both beheaded.

This alarming intelligence soon reached Elizabeth; and now, well assured of the deadly hatred of Richard toward herself and her family, she again sought her former asylum; and on the very night that the young king entered London, Elizabeth, with her five daughters, the eldest eighteen and youngest about three years old, together with her younger son the duke of York, and her brother, the bishop of Salisbury, took refuge in the sanctuary of Westminster. The graphic picture which Sir Thomas

More gives of the haste and hurry of her flight, and of her "sittinge alone, low upon the rushes, all desolate and dismayed," listening to the unavailing consolations of the archbishop of York, is probably true; but the story of his delivering the great seal to her is uncorroborated:—that he was friendly toward her, we have, however, strong evidence, in his being soon after imprisoned by Richard on a vague charge of treason. The coronation of the young king was now postponed to the close of June, and Richard was appointed lord protector: but he aimed at a higher station, and the execution of lord Hastings, the imprisonment of lord Stanley, and the accusation of Elizabeth, who, in his letters to his adherents in the north, he states had designed both his death and that of the duke of Buckingham, were but subordinate steps in his progress. To obtain possession of the other prince was a more important step; and to this end he commissioned the primate, cardinal Bourchier, to visit the queen for that purpose. What persuasions were used we have no means of knowing, for the long account of Sir Thomas More is evidently fiction; but one part of his narrative, that the Thames was covered with boats full of armed men, and that she therefore found resistance was vain, is corroborated by a contemporary letter; his concluding scene is, however, very natural and probable. "And therewithal she said unto the child, 'Farewel, my owne swete sonne; God send you gode keeping: let me kiss you once yet ere ye goe, for God knoweth when we shal kiss together again.' And therewith she kissed him, and blessed him,

turned her back and wept, and went her way, leaving the childe weping as fast." The sentenced child was led by the cardinal, "and other many lords temporal, into the mydest of Westminster hall, my lord protector recevyng hym at the sterre chamber dore, with many lovyng wordes, and so departed with my lord cardinal to ye Towre, wher he is, blessed be Jhesu, merry."* Thus wrote a detailer of the news of the day, little expecting the tragedy which should follow.

With the two princes in his possession, Richard now advanced a higher claim. The charge of illegitimacy, in consequence of a pre-contract of Edward with the lady Elinor Boteler, was made against the children, and the friends of Richard declared that he alone was the legitimate descendant of the house of York; public meetings were got up, and at length the crown was formally offered to him. This he refused with well-affected modesty, but the wishes of his friends were peremptory; he yielded after a decent struggle; and the preparations for the coronation of Edward the Fifth, served for those of Richard the Third. Desolate and unattended in the sanctuary of Westminster, Elizabeth remained mourning her separation from her two young sons, and the execution of her brother, and the second son of her former marriage, while her deadliest enemy, on the 6th of July, was anointed king, and the crown which she had worn was placed on the head of Anne Neville.

* Vide the letter in *Excerpta Historica*, page 12.

ANNE NEVILLE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Her splendid Coronation—Second Coronation at York—Death of the Princes in the Tower—Richard reconciled to Elizabeth Wydeville—Death of the Queen—Bosworth Field.

THE few notices which can be collected respecting this “pageant queen,” as, from her short-lived royalty, no less than from its splendours, she has been called, are so interwoven with the history of Elizabeth Wydeville, that in detailing them we still pursue the former narrative. Of the early life of this unfortunate lady, the second daughter and co-heiress of Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury and Warwick, and of Anne, the daughter and heiress of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, all that can be learned has already been before the reader; nor, from the period of her marriage with Richard, some time in 1472, to her coronation, have we any information respecting her.

From a contemporary letter, we find that Anne did not arrive in London until after that Richard had accepted the crown; and then she appears to have resided at the Tower, until the day before her coronation. The preparations for this ceremony, from the testimony of every contemporary writer, appear to have been costly and expensive beyond parallel;

and by some historians this has been considered as indicative of a singularly frivolous taste for show and gay apparel in Richard ; while others have viewed it as a politic measure, adopted to dazzle the eyes of the people, and prevent them from questioning his claim to the throne. It seems, however, to have been forgotten that this was a double coronation,—a ceremony which had not been witnessed in England since the days of Edward the Second and Isabel of France ; and that as both king and queen required a separate train of attendants, the procession would necessarily exhibit double splendour. From a most curious list of articles of clothing delivered on this occasion, we may form some estimate of the splendour of the queen's apparel. Among " the stuffe delivered to the queen," are twenty-seven yards of white cloth of gold for a kirtle and train, and a mantle of the same, richly furred with ermine. This was the dress in which she rode in her litter from the Tower to the palace of Westminster ; and in the minute details of the dresses of her pages and " henchmen," the cloth-of-gold trappings of her palfreys, and the rich array of her litter, a vivid idea of the splendour of a royal procession at this period may be formed. The robes " for her moost honorable use, for the day of her moost noble coronation," are indeed right royal ;—robe, kirtle, " surcote overt," and mantle, all of rich purple velvet, furred with ermine, and adorned with rings and tassels of gold ; and another suit of crimson velvet, " furred with pure minever."*

* Antiquarian Repertory, vol. i. p. 42. This was an age of long trains, and the length was regulated by the rank of the wearer ; as

Judging from Sandford's minute description of the coronation, it was indeed most splendid. On the 7th of July, Richard on horseback, and Anne in her litter, rode through the city to Westminster; on the morrow he proceeded to Westminster-hall, from whence he and the queen "went barefoot on a cloth of estate" to St. Edward's shrine, preceded by the clergy, bearing crosses, and the great officers of the household, bearing the regalia. Here they made their offerings, and then proceeded to the high altar, where they both were crowned by cardinal Bourchier, and then returned to Westminster-hall, where a sumptuous feast awaited them. On this occasion it seems to have been the aim of Richard to conciliate the Lancastrians; and it was remarked that the train of the king and of the queen were respectively borne by the two lineal representatives of the house of Lancaster, the duke of Buckingham, and the countess of Richmond.

Before the end of July, Richard, in great state, set out on a progress through the midland counties. On his arrival at Warwick, he was joined by the queen; and from thence they proceeded to Coventry, to Leicester, and to Nottingham, from whence his secretary despatched a characteristic letter to the mayor and aldermen of York, advising them to receive the king and queen "as laudably as your wisdom can imagine, with pageaunts and with such gode speeches

Anne for her whole purple velvet suit had fifty-six yards, the reader may judge of the length of her mantle alone. From the entries of scarlet cloth given to the nobility for mantles on this occasion, we find that duchesses had thirteen yards, countesses ten, and baronesses eight.

as can godely, this short warning considered, be devysed." Accordingly, on their arrival, Richard and Anne were received with every honour; and the coronation robes having been sent from London, they were a second time crowned in the chapter-house of the cathedral, by archbishop Rotherham; and then, preceded by all the clergy, with crosses and banners,—and that of the great patron saint of the North, St. Cuthbert, was on this occasion, by the king's direction, borne side by side with St. Edward's,—the king and queen, crowned and sceptred, walked in procession along the streets; Anne holding in her left hand prince Edward, her only child, a boy of ten years old, who wore "a demy crown," as prince of Wales.* Jousts and tournaments, miracle plays and feastings, succeeded; and the inhabitants of the surrounding country seem to have been well pleased with their new king. But while Richard was apparently only engaged in festivities, his eye was warily fixed on the movements of his enemies. A plot had been formed to restore the young king, and taking advantage of Richard's absence from London, his party had formed a plan to liberate the two young princes from the Tower; and, aided by the duke of Buckingham, who, from some mysterious cause, had in the short space of a few weeks changed from a warm friend to a bitter enemy of the reigning monarch, they seem to have entertained no doubt of success. But just when all things promised well, it was reported that the young princes were no longer

* Drake's Eboracum, p. 116.

living, and from that time the two hapless children were never seen.

The fate of the princes in the Tower is one of the most difficult questions in our history, and one that is still open to much discussion. That the minute statement of Sir Thomas More, which has been adopted by all our popular historians, is untrue, must be evident to every reader who follows his extraordinary statement.* That a remarkably astute and wary monarch should send a messenger from Gloucester to the Tower, with a letter to the constable, "that the same Sir Robert shoulde in any wise put the two chyldren to deathe;" that Brakenbury on such a subject should send a *verbal* refusal; that Richard on receiving this refusal should, like a mere child, lament to one of his pages that those who were bound to him "will do nothyng for me;" that, at the suggestion of this page, he should forthwith awaken Sir James Tyrel, make known his purpose, and send him up to London, to demand "all the keyes of the Tower for one nyghte,"—a demand sufficient to excite suspicion in the dullest mind;—that even then, Tyrel should not commit the murder himself, nor summon "blak Will Slaughter," who had charge of the two young princes, but, as though anxious for witnesses, call in Miles Forrest, and "John Dighton, a big, brode, square, strong knave;"—is a story which few, except the "veray indentured servauntes" of Tudor could believe. Still, while we reject this ridiculous tale of the circumstances attending these children's deaths, that they were murdered seems

* The Historie of Kyng Richarde the Thirde, p. 127.

most likely. All the contemporary writers express this opinion ; and it may be remarked, that although Richard was far from being the gratuitous ruffian which Tudor's policy has represented him to be, still, with the crown at stake, and entertaining a bitter hatred toward the mother of those children, the temptation to destroy them might be too strong to be resisted. The manner will probably always remain a mystery ; but violence could be scarcely needed, when damp or ill-ventilated rooms, or unwholesome food, would produce the same fatal result. The question, however, has great difficulties ; and nothing but a full and clear biography of Perkin Warbeck, if such should ever be obtainable, will avail to clear up this mysterious subject.

Foiled in their endeavours to reinstate Edward the Fifth, the duke of Buckingham and his adherents now brought forward the claims of Henry Tudor, and proposed, by his marriage with Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward the Fourth, to unite the houses of York and Lancaster. The proposal was communicated to Elizabeth Wydeville, who still remained in sanctuary ;—it met with her joyful approval, and Henry Tudor was summoned from Bretagne, and a rising was arranged for the 18th of October. These plans were soon made known to Richard, and he defeated them with his usual promptness. Henry Tudor, although he arrived off the English coast, dared not land ; the partisans of the duke of Buckingham fled, he was taken and executed, and Richard returned triumphant to London to keep his Christmas. At the meeting of parliament

in January, his right to the crown was confirmed; and the marriage of Edward with Elizabeth pronounced void, and her children declared illegitimate. The marquess of Dorset her son, and her two brothers, were attainted of high treason, and the adversity of this unfortunate woman now seems to have reached its height. Suddenly, on the 1st of March, Richard, hitherto so hostile to Elizabeth, made proposals of reconciliation, and in a curious document swore, on the word of a king, before the mayor and aldermen of London, that if she and her five daughters would quit the sanctuary, "and be guyded, ruled, and demeaned after me," he would allow her 700 marks a year, each of the daughters 200, and marry them "to gentilmen born."* His offer was accepted; Elizabeth and her daughters quitted their asylum, and now seem to have resided at court.

On the 9th of April, Richard and Anne sustained the severest loss which could befall them,—the death of their only son, Prince Edward. Of the circumstances of this child's death nothing is known; but from that time a rumour certainly prevailed, that the queen would not live long. The following Christmas was celebrated with uncommon splendour, Richard and Anne wearing their crowns and the most magnificent apparel; but what awakened the greatest surprise, says the Croyland continuator, "was that the younger Elizabeth was dressed in clothes of the same colour and make as those of queen Anne; and hence it was said by many, that the king either intended the death of the queen, or a divorce, that he

* Ellis's Letters, second series, vol. i. p. 149.

might marry Elizabeth.”* A late writer has remarked, that the only conclusion to be drawn from this fact is, that “Richard strictly fulfilled his engagement that his nieces should be supported as became his kinswomen;” but in this remark it is forgotten that the fifteenth century was an age of strict sumptuary laws, and that the act prohibiting all persons, except the king’s family, from wearing cloth of gold, or silk of a purple colour, under penalty of 20*l.*, had been passed but two years before. The allowing Elizabeth of York to wear the same dress as the queen, was therefore reinstating her in her royal rank, and in effect nullifying the act which had declared her illegitimate. Still that Richard seriously intended making her his wife is very improbable; and although the declining health of Anne might induce him to meditate a second marriage, an alliance with some foreign princess whose relations might aid him in his struggle to preserve his crown, must have appeared far more desirable than marriage with one whose declared illegitimacy, was actually the ground of his title to the throne. Meanwhile Anne declined in health, and about the middle of March died: a great eclipse of the sun happened on the same day,† and doubtless added to the suspicions which were already whispered against the king. That Anne was murdered has been boldly stated by some writers, and obscurely hinted by others; but, as a before-quoted writer remarks, it is “only upon the coincidence between the supposed wish of Richard to marry Elizabeth in December, and Anne’s decease in

* Vide p. 572.

† Croyland Cont.

March," that the charge rests. The body of this short-lived queen was conveyed to Westminster Abbey, and was there buried with due solemnity ; but no tomb or memorial marks her place of sepulture.

During this and the subsequent period we have very few notices of Elizabeth Wydeville. She appears, however, to have become reconciled to her brother-in-law ; and it is stated that she actually wrote to her son, the marquess of Dorset, urging him to break off his engagements with Tudor. But it is difficult to believe that, so deeply wounded as she had been, her reconciliation could be sincere : most probably she assumed the appearance of friendliness, the better to conceal her real feelings ;—disgraceful conduct, it is true, but to which few of the noble women of this age could plead guiltless. But Richard's sway and his life were soon to end. In August, Tudor landed at Milford-haven, and marched eastward, while Richard advanced from Nottingham to Leicester : on the 22nd of August the battle of Bosworth-field was fought, and the sceptre, which had been wielded for more than three centuries by our illustrious Plantagenets, passed for ever from their hands.

ELIZABETH WYDEVILLE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Accession of Tudor—His Marriage to Elizabeth of York—The last years of Elizabeth Wydeville—Her Death—Her Funeral—Conclusion.

WITH the victory of Bosworth-field, the long and bitter strife which had drained England of her noblest blood ended; and the nation, impoverished and exhausted, still attached to the house of Lancaster, hailed the accession of one who could only advance a collateral claim to the rights of that proud family. But, with the return of peace, English spirit revived not, and English freedom lay humbled in the dust; for that fierce and sanguinary conflict in which three kings, and almost threescore nobles, besides thousands of the commons, fell, was no stern strife for great and commanding principles, but a mere struggle of two rival families for the crown. The doctrine of strict hereditary right, was in this disastrous contest first brought forward by the Yorkists; and although their opponents could more constitutionally demand, "if the original consent of the nation—if three descents of the crown—if repeated acts of parliament—if oaths of allegiance from the whole

kingdom—could not secure the reigning family against a mere defect in their genealogy, when were the people to expect tranquillity ?” *—still, in the progress of the struggle, the Lancastrians themselves were forced to appeal to that very principle which erewhile they had repudiated. If York so bitterly felt his exclusion from an inheritance which neither he, nor his father, nor his grandfather, had actually possessed, what must be the feelings of good king Henry, driven from his birthright throne ;—he, the son and grandson of crowned and anointed kings ; he, in whose baby-hands *two* sceptres had been placed ; he, the only monarch who had ever been crowned king both of England and France ? Thus, the doctrine which regards a whole nation as the mere property of a family gained unsuspected entrance ; and while advancing the claims of York, or maintaining the rights of Lancaster, the people well-nigh forgot their own proud inheritance.

And injurious in its civil, as in its political results, was this mournful contest. The arts languished, civilisation retrograded, the grossest superstitions prevailed ; while every graceful and poetical observance retained its form alone, for the life-giving spirit had fled. Vainly did the venerable father of English printing exclaim, “ O ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry ? what do ye now but playe at dice, and sleep, and take ease, and are all disordered from chivalry ? Leave this, and read the noble volumes of St. Graal, of Lancelot, of Tristrem ;—there shall ye see manhode, courtesy, and

* Hallam.

gentillesse." But little place was there for the chivalric virtues in the formal and ceremonious court of the cold and suspicious Tudor, where a Clifford, an Empson, and a Dudley occupied stations erewhile bestowed on valiant knights and high-minded statesmen; and little interest could be felt for wild and wondrous romance, by nobles who sedulously studied the "Boke of regulacions for the kynges household," in which the precise length and breadth of the royal cradle was peremptorily determined, and the exact depth of the ermine on the queen's mantle, with the exact quantity of cloth of gold for its lining, were gravely set forth by authority. The poetical character which during the middle ages had informed and rendered beautiful every observance had fled; nor had the advantages of modern civilisation succeeded. "Old things" had well-nigh passed away, and society stood, though it knew it not, on the brink of that mighty ocean which was so soon to engulf the institutions, both political and religious, of mediæval Europe.

With the accession of Henry Tudor, a brighter day seemed to dawn upon Elizabeth Wydeville, and from a monarch who was pledged by the most solemn oaths to marry her eldest daughter, she might well expect both protection and honour. But Henry, from some unexplained cause, was evidently reluctant to fulfil his engagement; and five months elapsed, and the parliament reminded him of his promise, ere he assented to make Elizabeth of York his queen. One of the first acts of his reign had, however, been to restore Elizabeth Wydeville to her former rank, and

this has sometimes been appealed to as a proof of his kindly feelings toward her : but it should be remembered that her recognition as queen-dowager was the necessary consequence of the reversal of the act which declared her children illegitimate ; and pledged to recognise the daughters of Edward the Fourth as princesses, Henry could not avoid restoring the title of queen-dowager to their mother.

On the 18th of January, Henry married Elizabeth of York at Westminster ; and in the following March, he granted to the queen-dowager various lordships for life in part of her dower, as widow of Edward the Fourth, and 10*2*l. a year in full satisfaction of the residue. That at this period she was on friendly terms with her son-in-law, is proved by her being with her daughter the queen at Winchester when prince Arthur, her eldest son, was born ; and by her becoming sponsor to the young prince, and presenting to him a rich covered-cup of gold. When the queen left Winchester, she seems to have accompanied her to London ; but in the minute accounts of the Christmas festivities of this year, we do not find that she was present. In November 1487, Elizabeth of York was crowned ; but at this ceremony, which was conducted with great magnificence, and at which nearly all the nobility of the kingdom attended, Elizabeth Wydeville, to whom beyond every other that ceremony must have been most interesting, was not present, nor were any of her daughters, except Cecily, who soon after married lord Welles. In the minute account which Leland gives of the subsequent Christmas festival, the name of the queen's

mother is not to be found; nor in all his long descriptions of the Whitsun feasts, and festivals of the Garter, and gorgeous but tasteless observances of the following years, is she ever represented as being present. On one occasion alone do we find her mentioned; and this is as receiving the French ambassador, in November 1489, when the queen "took her chamber" previously to the birth of her eldest daughter Margaret. That Henry entertained some feeling of dislike toward her, seems very probable from this apparently studied exclusion of her from the royal court; but that this dislike was, at least up to this period, founded on private rather than political motives, is evident from his having during 1487 entered into negotiations with the king of Scots, for a marriage of that king with Elizabeth Wydeville, and of his two eldest sons with two of her daughters: an arrangement which could never have been sanctioned by the wary Tudor, had suspicion ever been awakened in his mind of the queen-dowager's loyalty. These negotiations were broken off in the following year by the death of the king of Scots, and from this time we find no public document relating to Elizabeth, except an assignment of 400*l.* a year in February 1490, as an annual pension, and probably in lieu of her dower.

From this period she probably retired to the abbey of Bermondsey; although whether as a voluntary inmate, or whether, as so many writers have stated, as a prisoner, it is most difficult to decide. That she should seek this convent for religious purposes, is impossible;—for it was an abbey for monks; while, even if it had been a female conventual establish-

ment, Elizabeth would scarcely have chosen it, when the priory of Dartford, to which she had years before consigned her youngest daughter, offered her a more eligible retreat. It may, perhaps, be asked, might she not for some unexplained cause have taken sanctuary here?—but in such case it is far more likely that she would have fled to her old place of refuge, Westminster, where the same abbot who had protected her from Richard, still wielded the crosier. Viewing the subject in all its bearings, it seems difficult to come to any other decision than that she was a prisoner.

With the cause of her imprisonment we are wholly unacquainted: since with the rising of the earl of Lincoln she was certainly unconnected, for at that period, and for months subsequently, she was at court, and in favour; while in the plot of Perkin Warbeck she could not have been involved, for she died just before he set foot in England. In every respect the last days of this unhappy queen are shrouded in mystery; and that she died neglected and desolate, is all we know. Of this, her will, dated about three months before her death, affords sufficient proof. After directing that she shall be buried at Windsor, without pomp or great expense,—a direction most strictly followed,—she continues, “and whereas I have no worldly goods to do the queen’s grace, my dearest daughter, a pleasure with, neither to rewarde any of my chyldren accordyng to my herte and mynde; I beseche Almyghty God to bless her grace and all her noble issue, and, withe as gode herte and mynde as is to me possible, I give her grace my blessing, and all my foresayde chyldren.”

Such "small stuff and goods" as she possessed, she directs to be sold to pay her debts; and she entreats her son the marquess of Dorset, and her dearest daughter the queen, to see that her wishes are fulfilled. Such is the will of the last queen who wore the crown of the Plantagenets!—not a single jewel, not a silver cup, nor furred mantle, did the widow of one of our wealthiest and most splendour-loving sovereigns possess, "to do my dearest daughter a pleasure with;"—not a single mark or noble to pay for those church services, which the poorest in the land sought so anxiously to obtain!

On the 8th of June, 1492, the troubled life of Elizabeth Wydeville ended in the abbey of Bermondsey; and in the following curious account of one who was most probably an eye-witness, we have a full corroboration of the state of destitution in which she died:—"The sayde queen desired on her dethe-bedde, that as soone as she shulde be discessed, she shulde, in all goodly haste, without any worldly pompe, by water be conveyed to Wyndesore, and ther to be buried in the same vaulte that her husbände was beried in. On Whitsondaye she was thus conveyed to Wyndesore, and ther prevely, thro' the little parke, conveyed into the castel, withoute ryngyng of any belles, or — the dean and canons, but only by the prior of the charter-house of Shene, and her chaplain, Dr. Brent. And so, prevely, about *xi of the clock in the nyght* she was beried, withoute any solempne dirige, or the more any solempne masse doone for her. On the morne theder came the bishop of Rochester to do the service; but that day ther was

no thyng doon solemply for her, saving a low herse, suche as they use for the comyn peple, with iiii wooden candlestickes about hit, and a clothe of blacke cloth of gold, and on hit iiii candlestikes of sylver gilt, everych having a taper of no grete wyrthe, and six scotcheons of her arms crowned, painted on that clothe." On the Tuesday her three youngest daughters, with a few other ladies, and the marquess of Dorset, with some noblemen, came privately to the dirge. But even at this solemnity, the writer remarks, "ther was nevyr an newe torche, but olde torches, nor pore men in blacke gounes nor hodys; but a dozen olde men, holdyng olde torches :"* and thus, at a period more distinguished than any other for pompous and most expensive funerals, were the obsequies of Elizabeth Wydeville performed. No monument was erected to her memory; and while Tudor reared for himself the most gorgeous sepulchral chapel which Europe can show, the last queen of the most illustrious dynasty that ever swayed the sceptre of England, neglected in her death, dishonoured in her obsequies, slumbers without a tomb.

The children of Elizabeth Wydeville's second marriage, beside two who died in infancy, were Edward the Fifth, and his brother Richard, who most probably were murdered in the Tower; Eliza-

* Arundel MSS., No. 26. The writer says, "I praye to God to have mercy on her soul;" and adds, "at thys same season, the quene her daughter toke her chamber, whereof I cannot tell what dolent—but I suppose she went in *blew*, likewise as quene Margaret, the wife of king Henry VI., went in, whenne hyr mother the quene of Cecille deyde." As a contrast to this disgraceful funeral, the reader a few pages farther on may read the account, evidently by the same hand, of the magnificent funeral, by order of the king, of lord Welles, who married Cecily Plantagenet.

beth, who became the wife of Henry the Seventh; Mary, who died in 1482, at the age of sixteen; Cecily, who was married in 1487, to lord viscount Welles; Anne, who in 1495 married Thomas, lord Howard; Katherine, who in the same year married William Courtenay, earl of Devon; and Bridget, who very early in life took the veil at Dartford priory, and died there in 1517.

With the last queen who wore the crown of the Plantagenets, the history of the fifteenth century and of the mediæval period alike closes, and here these volumes will close. The field of modern English history has of late been so extensively and ably reaped, that but little remains to reward the gleaner; while the later queens of England have so frequently been made the subjects of history or biography, that the events of their lives are fully known. But these illustrious women, the queens of an earlier and far more obscure period, viewed in dim and shadowy outline, or at best in an imperfect light, have in some instances been misrepresented, but in many more dismissed, with merely a slight passing notice. To vindicate the fame of some of these illustrious women, to exhibit the commanding talents and gentle virtues of others,—above all, to endeavour to present to the reader a picture of that important period of our history, so distinguished as the birth-time of our political institutions, our arts, our commerce, our language, our poetry, has been the aim of the writer;—should this be effected, her pleasant task will not have been in vain.

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1, p. 209.

THE will of the Black Prince, which may be found in "Royal and Noble Wills," in its original Norman-French, is a very curious and interesting document. It is dated only three days before his death; and first of all, directs that he shall be buried in Canterbury cathedral, "where the body of the true martyr St. Thomas" lies, and that his tomb shall be of stone, with twelve escutcheons, six with his arms entire, and six with the ostrich feathers, and "over each our motto *hou-mont*." An image, in his likeness, of laton gilded, is to be placed on the tomb, "wholly armed with our leopard helmet under the head of the image; and we will that upon our tomb, where it may most clearly be read and seen, this which follows, be written." Would not the reader from this introduction suppose that the epitaph was a lofty eulogy upon that unrivalled warrior who slumbered below? but these are the simple and touching lines, which ask the passer-by to join with him in his supplication for mercy. The original is in Norman-French, and the following is a close translation:—

"Thou, who heedless passest by
Where these mouldering ashes lie,
Listen well to what I say,
Mine shall be no idle lay;—
Whilom I was like to thee,
What I now am *thou* must be.

Little thought of death was mine,
Offspring of a royal line;
With riches, rank, and honours great,
For full lofty was my state;
With lands and houses, wealth untold,
Banners and palfreys, silver, gold.

But my high estate is gone,
I am in the earth alone,—
My fresh beauty passed away,
And my flesh but mouldering clay.

Very narrow is my cell :—
 And if once ye knew me well,
 Now I could no more be known,
 Changed and blighted—helpless one,—
 Nor could I ward off weakest blow,
 Though erst I feared no mortal foe.

Then pray ye to the King of Heaven,
 That mercy to my soul be given ;—
 And O ! that all who for me pray
 For grace, may find it ; Lord may they,
 From sin and wretchedness set free,
 Dwell aye in paradise with thee !”

NOTE 2, p. 217.

Knyghton, who gives the fullest, and it is probable, the most authentic account of this insurrection, has preserved the addresses which, either written, or it is more likely, in the greater number of instances, repeated from memory, summoned the commons of the eastern counties. In one, “ Jacke Mylner asketh helpe to turn his mylne,” and bids them look that it go aright, with the four sails, and that the “ post stande in stedfastnesse.” “ With myghte and with ryghte, with skille and with wille, let myghte helpe ryghte, and skille go before wille, then goeth oure mylne aryghte.” Jack Carter prays that they may make a good end of what they have begun, for “ if the end is wel, al is wel.” Jack Trewman appropriately declares that since “ falshode and guile have reigned too longe,” he must come to their aid ; for “ clerkes for welthe work hem wo.” “ No man maye come truthe to, but he sing *si dederò*.” John Balle, the celebrated preacher, greets them all well, and tells them that he has “ ronge ther bell. Now is tyme, Ladye helpe to Jesus thy sone.” In another, he remarks in homely rhymes, that since pride and profligacy and covetousness abound, now is the time for reformation. It is strange that not one of these curious addresses dwells upon any specific grievance ; but while all are couched in the most general terms, they are certainly, considering the purpose for which they were promulgated, singularly moderate.

NOTE 3, p. 258.

Many writers on English poetry have given specimens from Piers Ploughman, and an epitome of his work ; but the rich vein of humour which pervades the greater part, seems entirely to have escaped them. The outline of the third book may be taken as a specimen of this. Maiden Mede (Bribery) clothed in furs and rich garments, with coronal on her head and rings on every finger, is brought in to be married to

Falsehood. Theology forbids this marriage, and directs that Mede and her company be carried up to London, to await the king's judgment. Guile borrows many horses, which their owners never see again ; Simony seeks out rich and devout men to carry him ; the officers of the ecclesiastical court make the same use of executors, and Maiden Mede (Bribery) is consigned to the care of a sheriff, who carries her safely up to London, from one assize to another. When the king saw this rout coming he was very wroth, and directed a constable to take them. Fear, who stood at the door, heard this, and gave warning. Then Falsehood fled to the friars ; Guile fled, but was met by the merchants, who made him stay with them, and " apparellyd hym lyk ther prentys, the peple to serve ;" Liar " lept lyghtly away," but though many gave him lodging, few liked him ; at length the " pardoneres " had pity upon him, and they washed him and clothed him, and sent him on Sundays to the churches with briefs ; but now the doctors were angry, for they wanted him ; and the apothecaries too, because he understood drugs. Minstrels and king's messengers at length met him, and fetched him away, and they kept him, until at length the friars took him, and put him on their own habit, and Liar has lived with them ever since, except when sometimes he takes a walk out. When Maiden Mede was conducted into Westminster-hall, many of the judges hastened to her, and comforted her. She gently thanked them, and gave them silver cups and rings with rubies. Then clerks came to her, and she promised to make them bishops ; then a friar came, and she knelt down and confessed herself " with abundance of lies," and she gave him a noble to subvert conscience " among knyghtes and clerks." Then the friar begged her to give somewhat toward glazing a window in their church, promising that they would insert her name there, and would daily sing for her as for " a suster of our ordre." The lady smiles " lovelilye," and promises to " fayle him never," while he is so lenient to her sins. The same humour pervades even the confessions of the representatives of the seven deadly sins. " Are you ever sorry for your faults ?" says Repentance to Envy. " Ay truly, I am, and seldom otherwise, for I cannot get my own way." " Did you ever make restitution ?" is her question to Covetousness. " Yes, once, when I was at an inn with a company of chapmen, for when they were asleep I rifled their packs." He also gives a history of his education. He served first with " Sym at the style," and there learnt to tell a lie or two ; his next instruction was to use false weights, and thus prepared, he went to Wye and Winchester fairs ; where, had it not been for " the grace of Guile, my wares had not been sold for seven years to come." To complete his education he went among the drapers ; and by them he seems to have been taught the whole art and mystery of short measure. These specimens will give the reader some idea of the humour of this singular work ; but it is only by reading

it, not in short extracts, nor from the modernized version, but in lengthened portions, and in the forcible original, that a just estimate of the "Vision of Piers Ploughman" can be formed.

NOTE 4, p. 263.

The balades of Gower, fifty in number, are, with the exception of a very few, still confined to a manuscript in the duke of Sutherland's library. Four were first inserted by Mr. Thomas Warton, in his History of English Poetry; and several years after, Mr. Todd, by permission of the marquis of Stafford, printed five more in his "Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer." The three following translations are made from the specimens in that work; and, as in the case of her former translations, the writer has been anxious to give as close a version as possible of these elegant poems.

The following bears a striking resemblance to the poems of that metaphysical school, of which Donne has furnished both the best and the worst specimens:—the *refrain* has been retained in its original French, from the difficulty of giving the precise words within the limits of a single line.

A wondrous wight is Love, I ween—
A thousand thousand forms he weareth;
A tricksey sprite, full often seen
And known, though ev'ry name he beareth:
He's rich, he's poor—he's noble, and he's mean—
The thornless briar—the nettle's rose is he,
En toutz erreurs Amour se justifie.

His gall is honey-sweet—his honey sour—
His toil is ease, and yet his calm is painful—
His griefs are pleasant, but his changeful power
Makes surety dangerous, yet losses gainful—
And high things low, and low things high to tower—
Weeping to laughter, sense to scorn turns he,
En toutz erreurs Amour se justifie.

Ay, Love doth cheat his votaries wofully!
The nigh is far, what seemeth far is near;
A hateful face he wears—then suddenly
He smileth on his humble worshipper;
His meekness pride is—pride humility;
A wrathful lamb—a gentle lion he,
En toutz erreurs Amour se justifie.

Now doth he salvage seem—a meek dove now:
O! who can tell all his strange witcherie!
For slave is he, yet lord of all below,
En toutz erreurs Amour se justifie.

In the next specimen, not only has the cadence of the verse and the metre, as in the preceding, been preserved, but the alternate rhyming throughout is given as in the original. A version of the greater part of this "balade" appeared, some years since, in the *Edinburgh Review*: it was, however, singularly rugged in versification, and in some parts incorrect. It may be remarked, that the verse in the original is always remarkably sweet and flowing; and it may be doubted whether Alain Chartier, or Pierre Ronsard himself, ever sang a more graceful madrigal:—

To what shall I compare thee, merry May?
 Methinks I'll call thee Paradise, for ne'er
 Chanted the merle and thrush a sweeter lay;
 Nor greener were the fields, nor flowers more fair:
 Nature hath trickt herself beyond compare;—
 And Venus bids all lovers suit to pay;
 And none, when Love doth call, should ever answer nay.

 When all around I see how Nature, gay,
 And fresh, and jocund, riseth to repair
 The wrongs of winter, I sigh, Well away!
 For I am overwhelmed with grief and care;—
 All joyous are, while I alone must fare
 Withouten aught that might my grief allay,—
 Though none, when Love doth call, should ever answer nay.

 Ay, I must nettles pluck, not roses gay—
 Chaplet, alas! unmeet for me to wear;
 Since she who on my heart could pour bright day,
 Poureth but black despair:—
 And still she frowns, nor grants my long-urged prayer,
 Nor soothes the griefs that on my heart's core prey,—
 Though none, when Love doth call, should ever answer nay.

 Yet go, my song, seek out my lady fair,
 With humble boldness sue, and entrance pray;
 Full well I've taught thee, well canst thou declare,
 How, when Love calleth, none can answer nay.

The third will remind the reader of one of Lord Surrey's sonnets; and we could scarcely conclude with a more graceful and finished poem:—

Even as a frail barque 'neath the raging wind,
 Upon the wide seas, rocketh to and fro,
 Lady, thus quaked my heart, thus tost in mind,
 Heard I that bitter speech which caused my woe:
 That cruel blast hath laid my barque full low;
 Nor dare I put forth sail; yet, sure 'tis said,
 The shipwrecked one is lost, unless he challenge aid.